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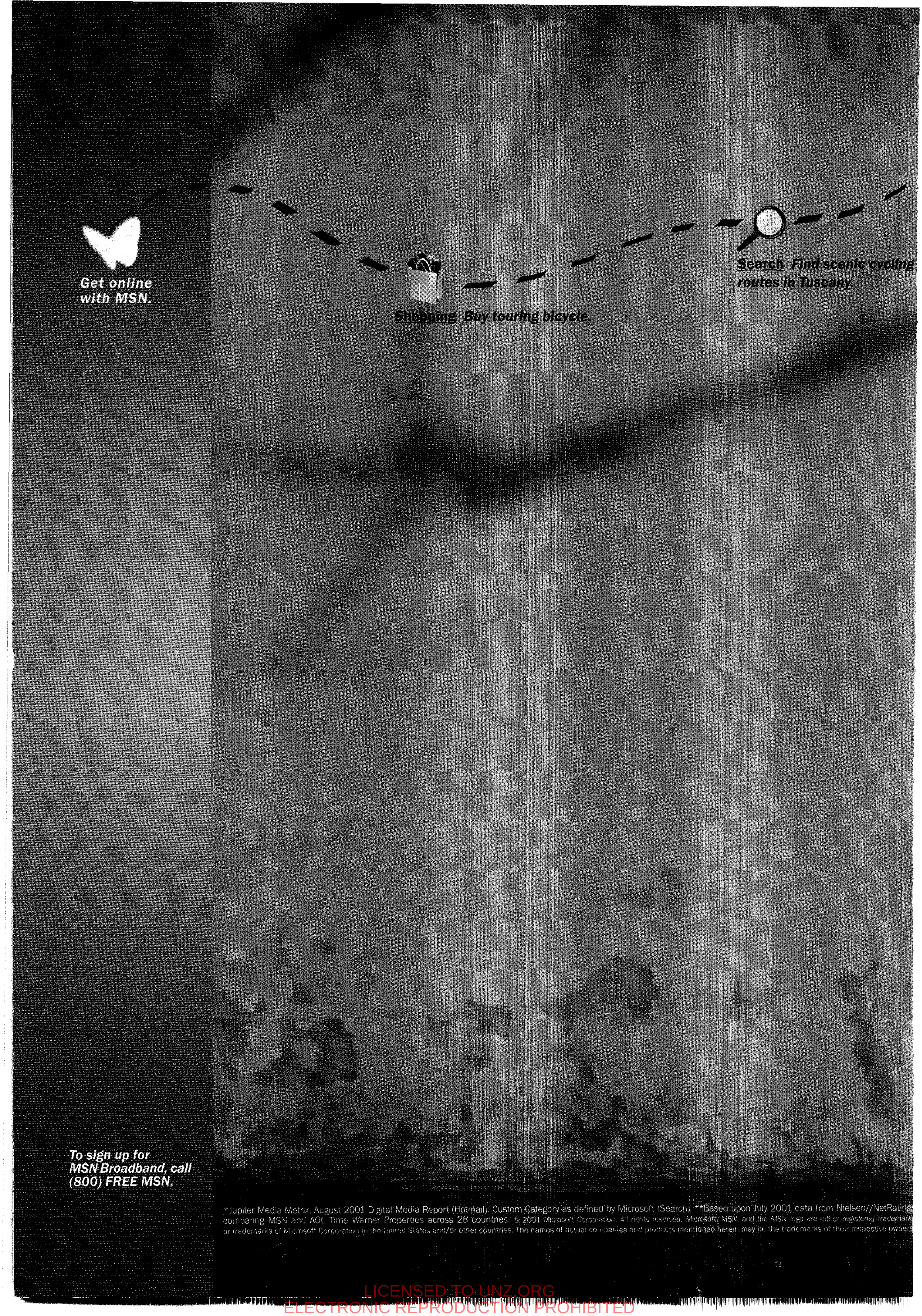
# THE NEW YORKER

OCT. 29, 2001



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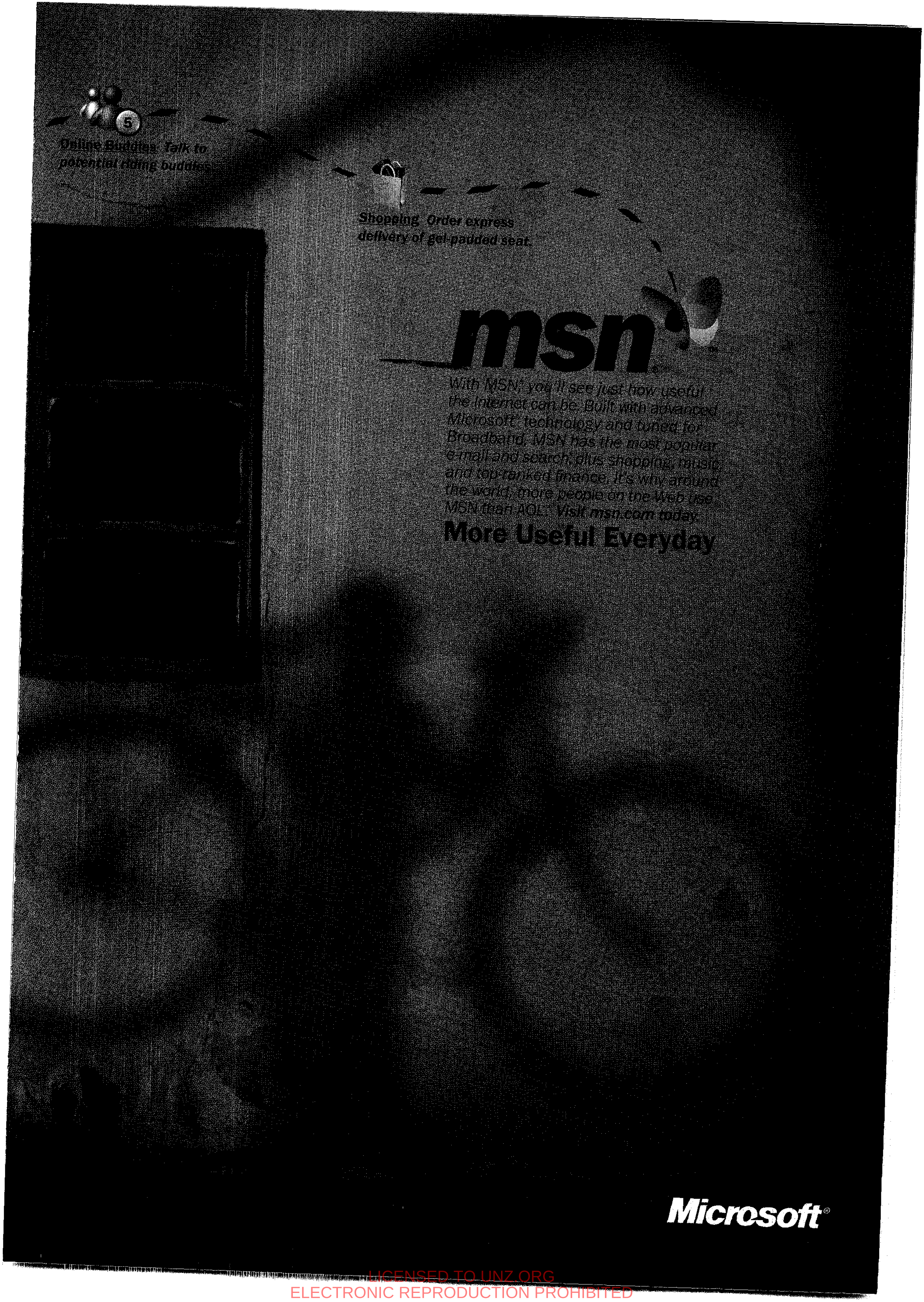

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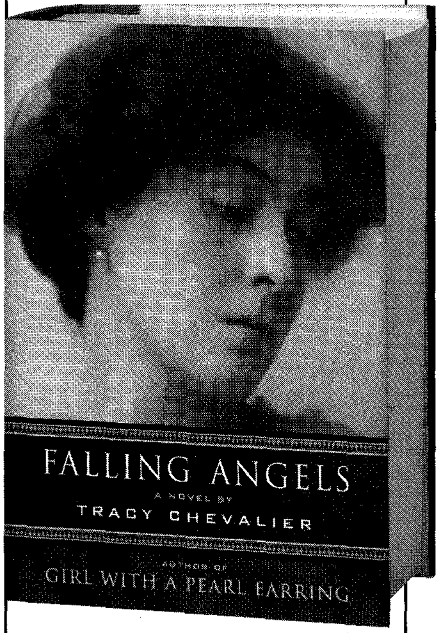

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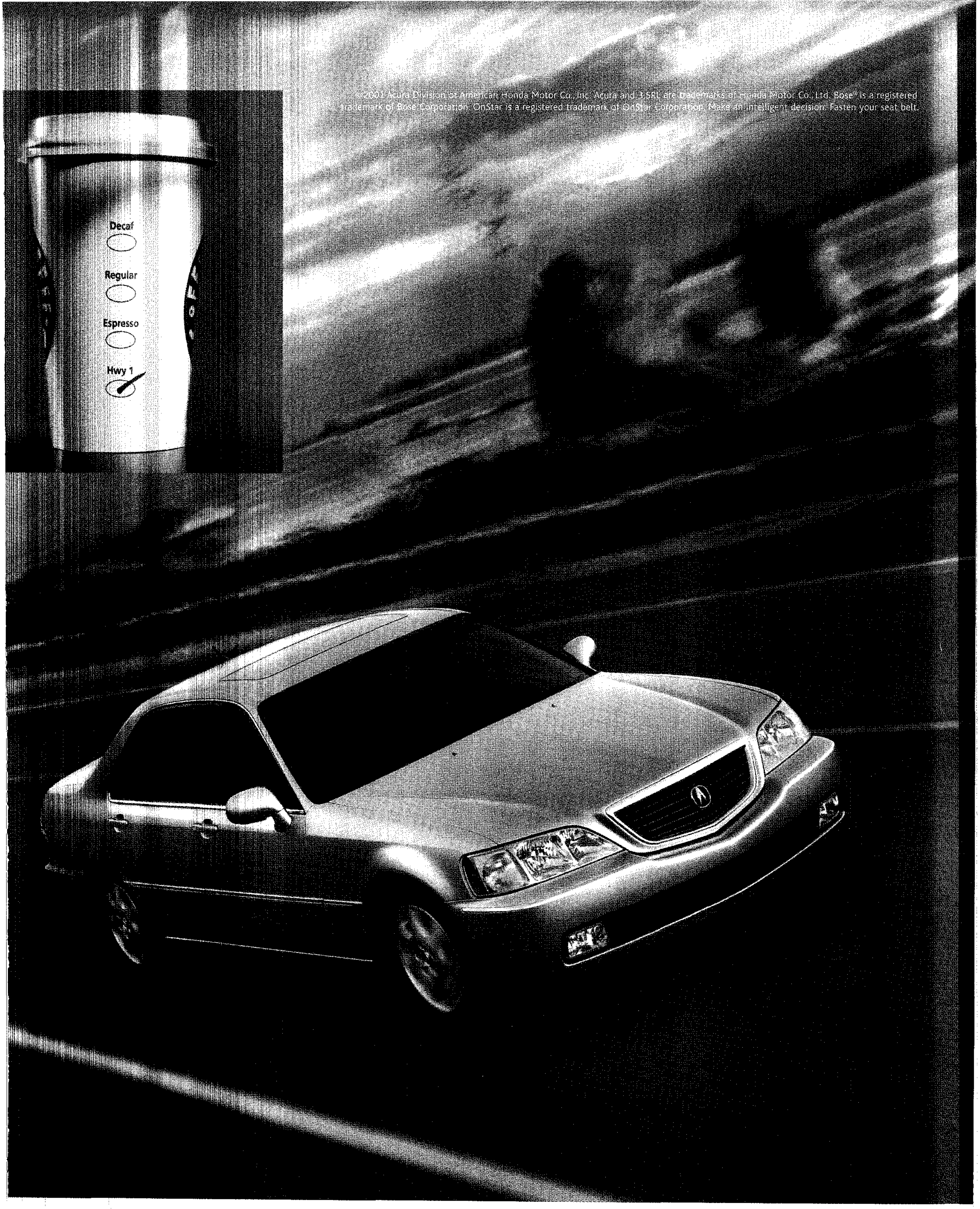

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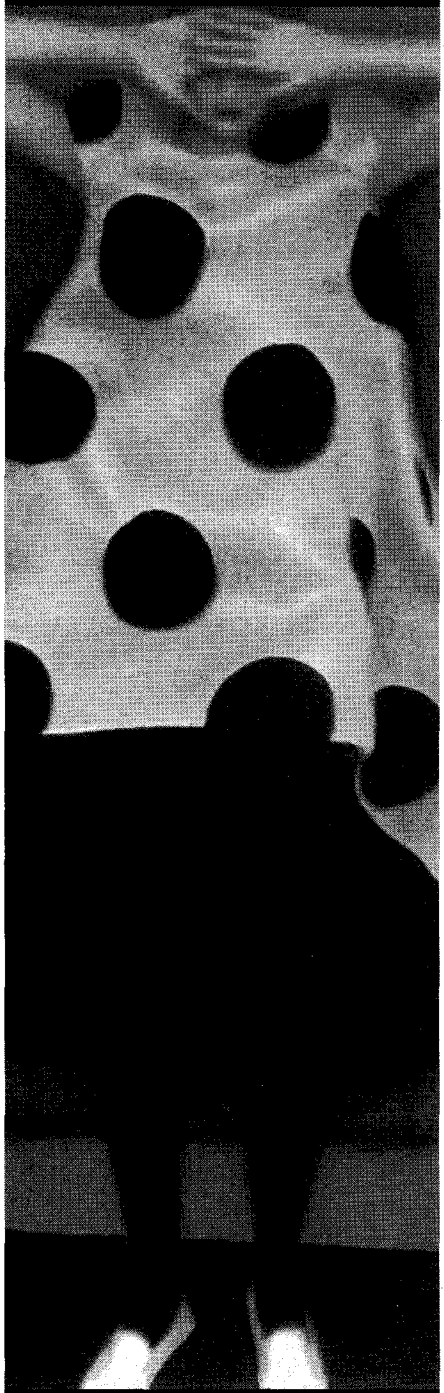

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# CONTRIBUTORS

Janet Malcolm ("Three Journeys," p. 62) is the author of eight books, including "Reading Chekhov: A Critical Journey," which comes out next month.

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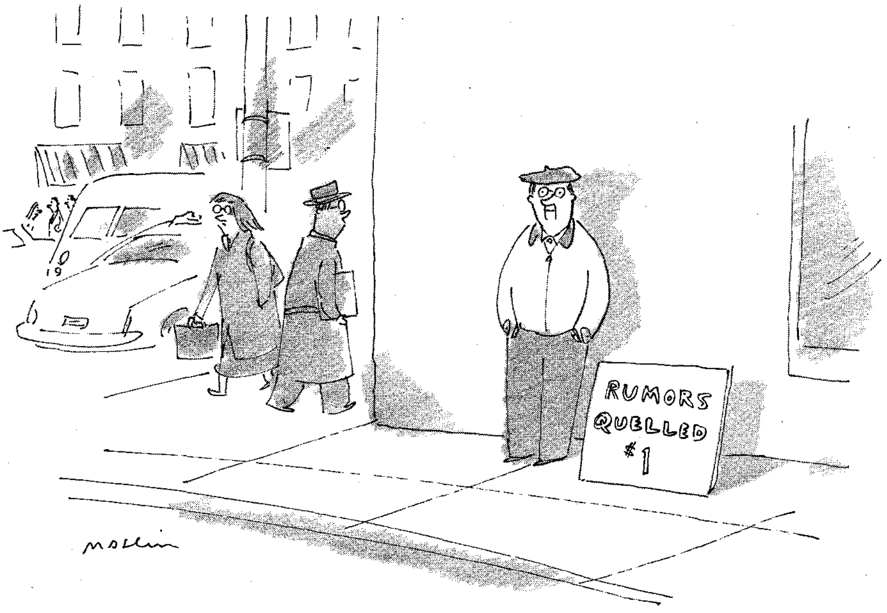
Ken Auletta ("Leviathan," p. 50) writes about business and media for the magazine. His book "World War 3.0: Microsoft and Its Enemies" came out in January.

Peter de Sève (Cover) illustrated Mark Twain's "A Murder, a Mystery, and a Marriage," a novella that was published for the first time this fall.

Czeslaw Milosz (Poem, p. 66) won a Nobel Prize in 1980. His "New and Collected Poems" and "To Begin Where I Am," a book of essays, both came out this month.

Judith Thurman (In Fashion, p. 90) is a staff writer and the author of "Secrets of the Flesh: A Life of Colette."

Calvin Trillin (Shouts & Murmurs, p. 42) has been contributing humorous pieces to the magazine since 1963. ♦



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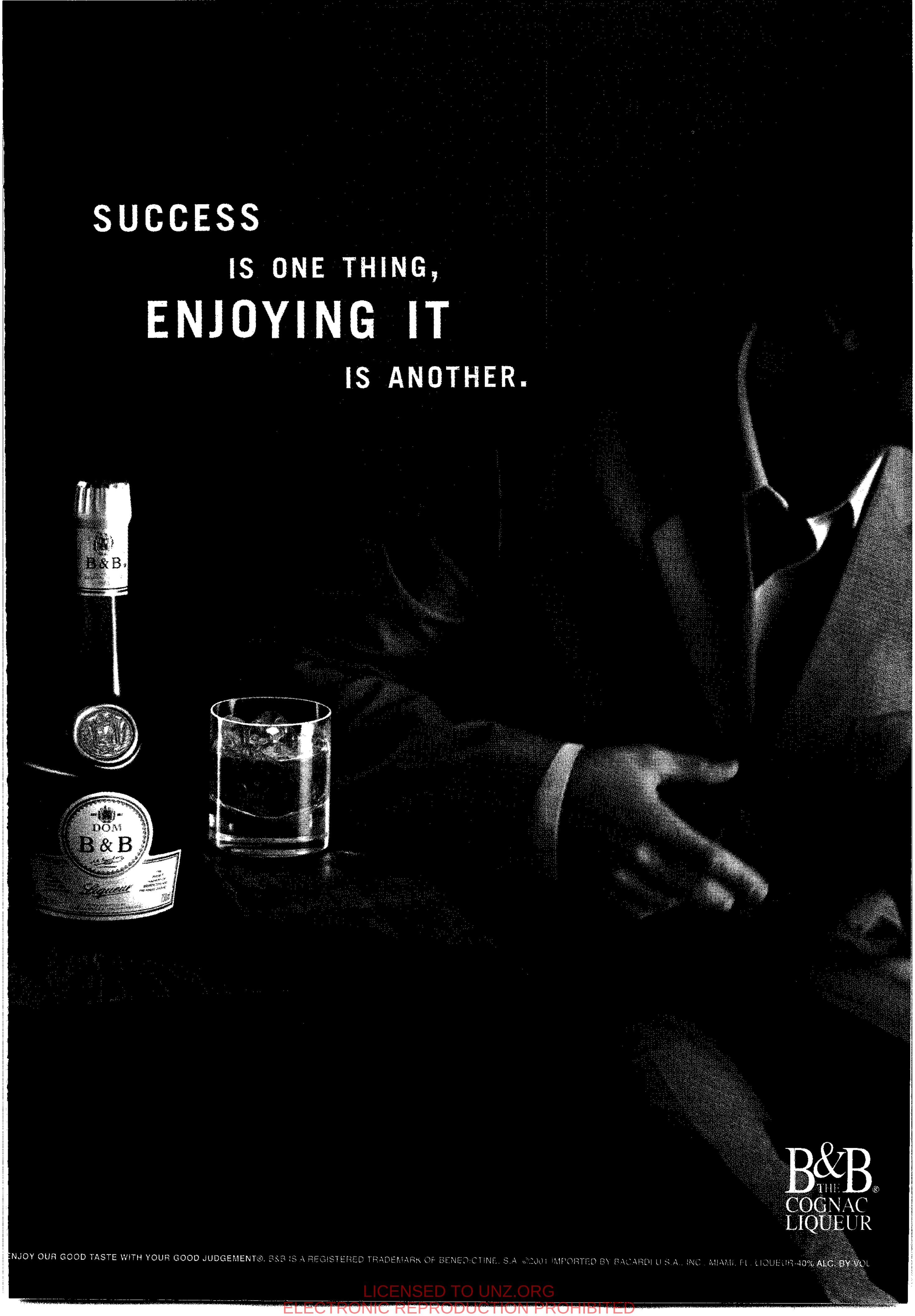
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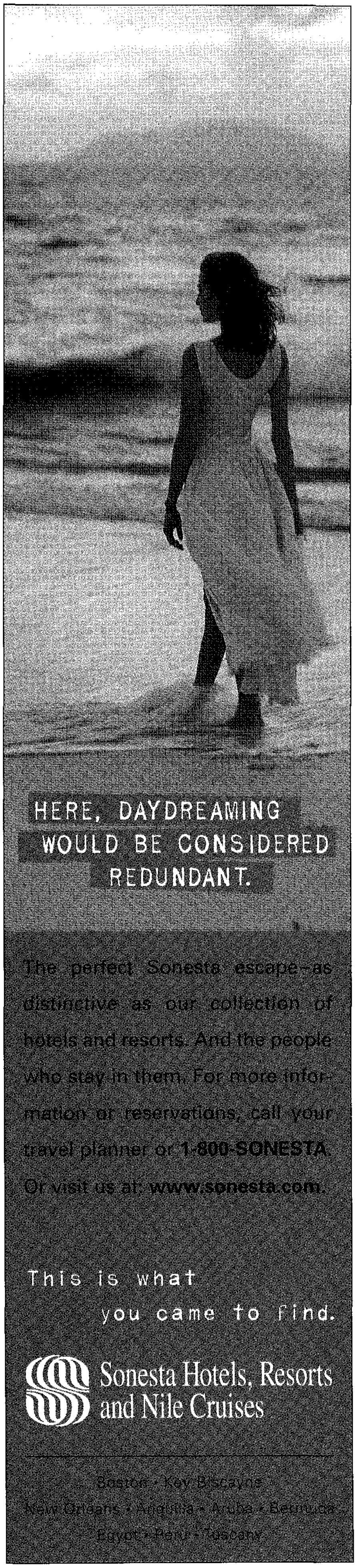

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# THE MAIL

## HOLDING BACK THE C.I.A.

Seymour M. Hersh quotes retired C.I.A. officers who argue that the intelligence failure before September 11th can be traced to the curtailment of certain unscrupulous practices, such as hiring killers as informants ("What Went Wrong," October 8th). Judging from the experience of other nations, the problem lies elsewhere. In Israel, the lack of restraints on intelligence services has not defeated terrorism. Nor has limiting civil liberties, as Attorney General John Ashcroft has advocated, worked for the British in Northern Ireland. Simply letting the government loose costs us what we really value, while gaining us nothing in terms of security. Without larger changes in our strategies and policies, resuming dirty tactics would be foolish, unsound, and ultimately ineffective.

*Sean Bruner*
*Tucson, Ariz.*

## DODGERS' DAY OF INFAMY

In a story about memory research and September 11th, a psychologist noted that his own "flashbulb memory" of hearing the Pearl Harbor attack announced during a baseball game—in December—was impossible (The Talk of the Town, by Ian Parker, October 8th). The raw material for his mind's trick was probably the radio broadcast of the Brooklyn Dodgers game—the football Dodgers, that is—which was famously interrupted that day. (Ace Parker, a future Hall of Famer, was the quarterback.) These Dodgers also played at Ebbets Field, until they vanished after the war in a series of mergers. Their loss was less of a community trauma than was that of their baseball counterparts, but still painful to those who cared.

*Naomi Lipman*
*Scarsdale, N.Y.*

## DOWNTOWN E.R.

Your report, "September 11, 2001," says that, in all the downtown hospitals that day, "the halls were relatively empty" (September 24th). In the emergency room at N.Y.U. Downtown Hospital, four blocks from where the Twin Towers stood, the picture was very different. We treated some six hundred victims of the attack and sheltered another five hundred from the cloud of debris that engulfed us. The impression, now widespread, that hospitals had few patients to treat was derived mainly from hospitals outside the immediate disaster zone, such as St. Vincent's. I was very proud of my staff that day. We handled a dozen severe multi-system traumas, fifty or so serious injuries, and hundreds of lesser complaints. Not one diagnosis was missed, and not one patient failed to receive the treatment he or she required.

*Tony Dajer*
*Asst. Medical Director, Emergency Dept.*
*N.Y.U. Downtown Hospital*
*New York City*

## A TASTE OF TROUT

As a fly fisherman, I was enjoying Ian Frazier's trout tales—until he surprised me by killing and eating a wild trout ("Five Fish," October 8th). Most fly fishermen, although they may have grown up in an era when harvesting wild trout for food was acceptable, have long since become proponents of catch-and-release—returning a fish to the stream to live and fight another day—even when it's legal to keep the trout. One of the pleasures of fly fishing is pitting oneself against a wild prey without causing it harm. Any fly fisherman hungry for trout can head to the grocery store and buy the farm-raised variety. If Frazier has developed a palate discerning enough to prefer wild trout to farm raised, then he has killed and eaten far too many wild fish.

*Steven Herbert*
*Penfield, N.Y.*

•

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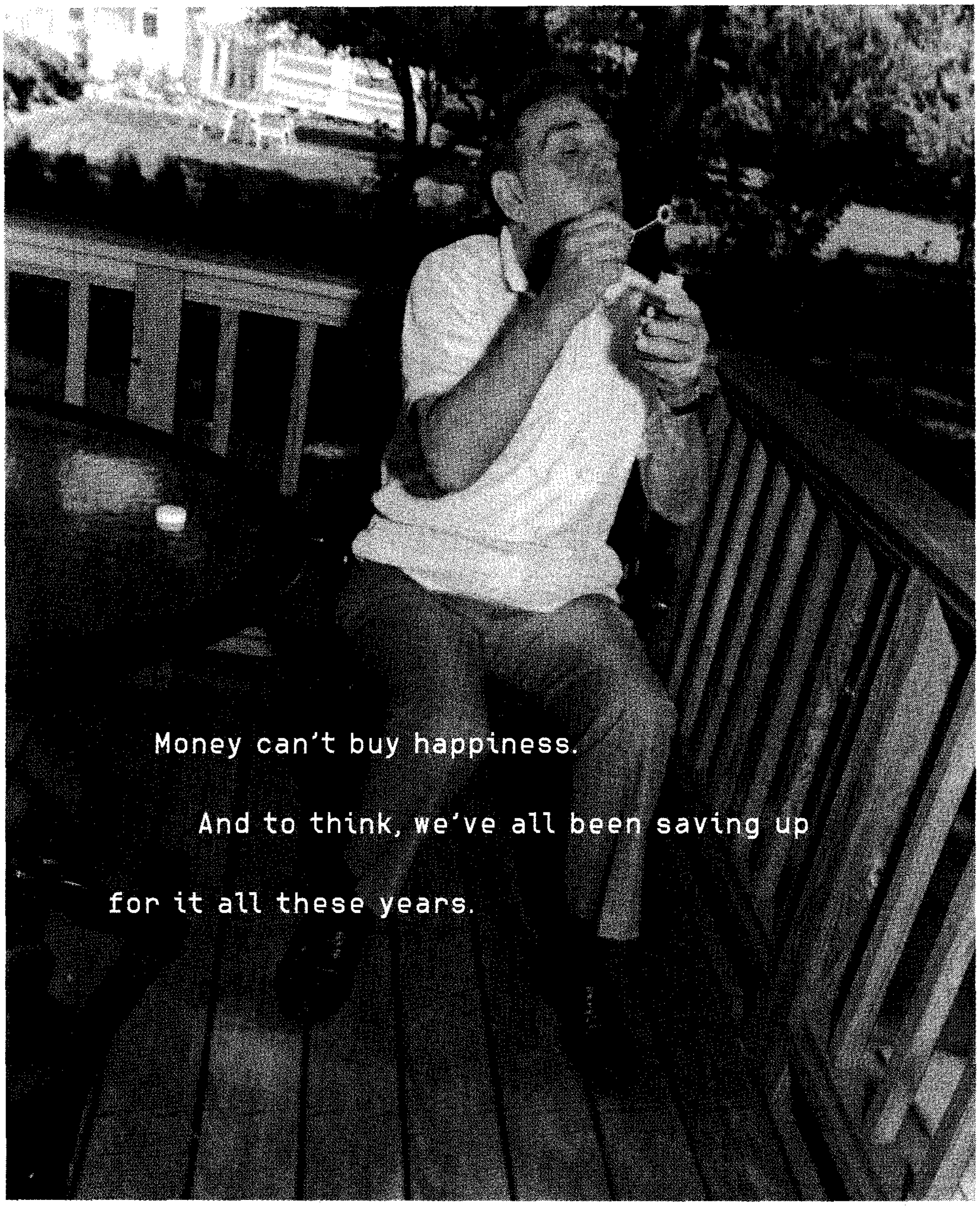
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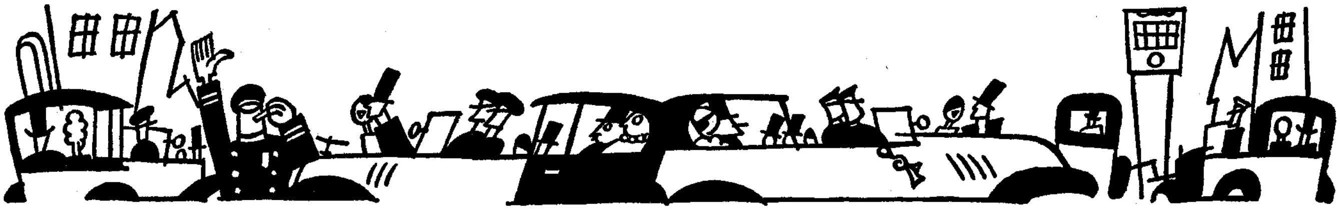
# GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN



## THE THEATRE

### OPENINGS & PREVIEWS

*Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.*

**BY JEEVES**
P. G. Wodehouse's manservant has been musicalized by Alan Ayckbourn (book and lyrics) and Andrew Lloyd Webber (score). Mr. Ayckbourn is the director. In previews through Oct. 27. Opens Oct. 28 at 6:30. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

**ELAINE STRITCH AT LIBERTY**
The Broadway star sings songs and tells tales about her life in the theatre, in a one-woman show co-created with *The New Yorker's* theatre critic John Lahr. George Wolfe is the director. Previews begin Oct. 26. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400.)

**EVERETT BEEKIN**
Bebe Neuwirth and Robin Bartlett lead the cast in Richard Greenberg's new play, which traces the history of a Jewish family through four generations, from New York to California. In previews. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

**EVERYTHING THAT RISES MUST CONVERGE**
New York Theatre Workshop presents a staging by Karin Coonrod of three stories by Flannery O'Connor. In previews. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 239-6200.)

**45 SECONDS FROM BROADWAY**
Neil Simon's new comedy is set in the Edison Hotel coffee shop, a hangout for theatre types. Directed by Jerry Zaks. In previews. (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

**THE GLORY OF LIVING**
Philip Seymour Hoffman directs a new drama by Chicago playwright Rebecca Gilman, which examines domestic violence. Previews begin Oct. 30. (MCC Theatre, 120 W. 28th St. 206-1515.)

**NOISES OFF**
Patti LuPone and Peter Gallagher lead the cast in a revised version of Michael Frayn's 1982 backstage comedy. Jeremy Sams is the director. In previews. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

**QED**
The atom-bomb physicist Richard Feynman's book (with Ralph Leighton) "Tuva or Bust!" was the inspiration for this two-character play by Peter Parnell, starring Alan Alda and Kellie Overbey. Gordon Davidson is the director. In previews. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

**SEXAHOLIX**
John Leguizamo's new solo show. In previews. (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

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**SHINY HOT NIGHTS: MORE SONGS OF JONI MITCHELL**
The performance artist John Kelly stars in a follow-up to his 1997 one-man paean to the singer. Saturdays only. Opens Oct. 27 at 8. (Fez, 380 Lafayette St. 533-2680.)

**SPEAKING IN TONGUES**
A new play by Andrew Bovell (who co-wrote the film "Strictly Ballroom"), which is described as a "psychological thriller, murder mystery, and partner-swapping satire." Karen Allen and Kevin Anderson lead the cast. Mark Clements is the director. Previews begin Oct. 26. (Gramercy Theatre, 127 E. 23rd St. 307-4100.)

**THE SQUARE**
The Ma-Yi Theatre presents sixteen short plays examining the Asian-American experience. In previews through Oct. 26. Opens Oct. 27 at 8. (Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. 239-6200.)

**THOU SHALT NOT**
Susan Stroman is the director of a new musical, based on Zola's "Thérèse Raquin" and set in New Orleans after the Second World War, with a score by Harry Connick, Jr., and a book by David Thompson. Two previews on Oct. 24. Opens Oct. 25 at 6:45. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

**THE WOMEN**
Scott Elliott directs a cast that includes Kristen Johnston, Rue McClanahan, Cynthia Nixon, Jennifer Tilly, Mary Louise Wilson, and Jennifer Coolidge, in Clare Boothe Luce's 1936 satire. With costumes by Isaac Mizrahi. In previews. (American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. 719-1300.)

**WONDER OF THE WORLD**
Sarah Jessica Parker portrays a runaway housewife with a disturbed husband, in a new dark comedy by David Lindsay-Abaire. Christopher Ashley is the director. In previews. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

### OPENED RECENTLY

**AN ADULT EVENING OF SHEL SILVERSTEIN**
The Atlantic Theatre Company opens the season with ten one-acts by the writer-cartoonist-composer-lyricist. (336 W. 20th St. 239-6200.)

**BERLIN**
A drama by G. L. Zevin, about a Nazi cinema star in postwar Berlin. Oct. 25-26 at 8 and Oct. 27 at 2 and 8. (Tribeca Playhouse, 111 Reade St. 206-1515. Closes Nov. 3.)

**THE COMPLETE WORKS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (ABRIDGED)**
A revival of Adam Long, Daniel Singer, and Jess Winfield's comedy, in which three actors (Peter Ackerman, Jeremy Shamos, and David Turner) perform thirty-seven plays and a hundred and fifty-four sonnets in under two hours. (Century Center, 111 E. 15th St. 239-6200.)

**DANCE OF DEATH**
Ian McKellen and Helen Mirren portray Strindberg's tortured husband and wife in a new adaptation written by Richard Greenberg and directed by Sean Mathias. (Reviewed in our issue of 10/22/01.) (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

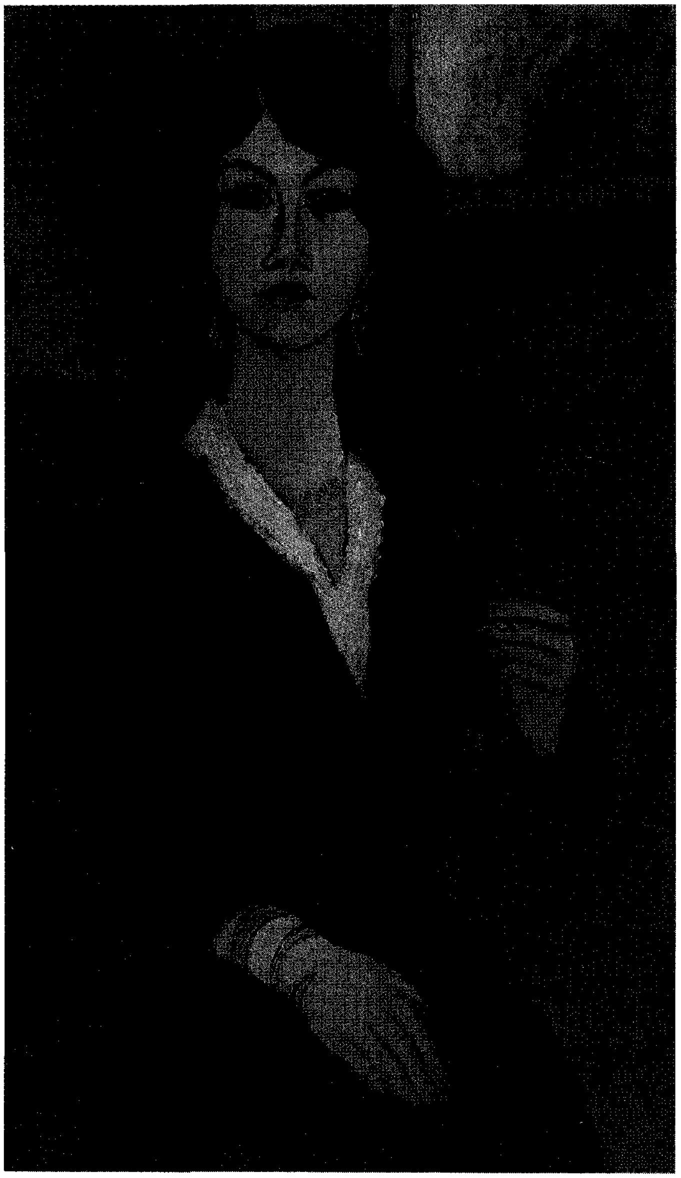
**HAVANA IS WAITING**
In Eduardo Machado's new drama, a Cuban-American man returns to Havana after being sent to Miami as a child in 1961. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 239-6200.)

**HEDDA GABLER**
Kate Burton has the title role in Ibsen's 1890 play, directed by Nicholas Martin. (10/22/01) (Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

**THE LATE HENRY MOSS**
In Sam Shepard's latest play, a pair of estranged brothers (Ethan Hawke and Arliss Howard) show up at their abusive, alcoholic father's broken-down house to bury him. First, though, they bully the hell out of each other. The show has been pared down by half an hour since it débuted at San Francisco's Magic Theatre, but it still drags on too long and lacks the thrilling flinch-inducing impact of Shepard's earlier, less diffuse plays. Hawke is surprisingly good, and his childlike face actually lends menace to his character. Talented as they are, however, Howard could never be Hawke's older brother, and Guy Boyd is too much of a cartoon bear in his portrayal of their father, who appears more befuddled than frightening in drunken-stupor flashbacks. The supporting cast members (Clark Middleton, Jose Perez, and Sheila Tousey) are excellent. Joseph Chaikin is the director. (Signature Theatre, 555 W. 42nd St. 244-7529. Closes Nov. 4.)

**LIGHT YEARS**
A new comedy by Billy Aronson, about four college roommates. (Theatre Three, 311 W. 43rd St. 279-4200.)

**THE MADWOMAN OF CHAILLOT**
Anne Jackson has the title role and Kim Hunter portrays her friend Mlle. Gabrielle in Jean Giraudoux's 1945 comic fable, in which a group of eccentric women foil an evil plot to destroy Paris. (Neighborhood Playhouse, 340 E. 54th St. 308-6866. Closes Oct. 28.)



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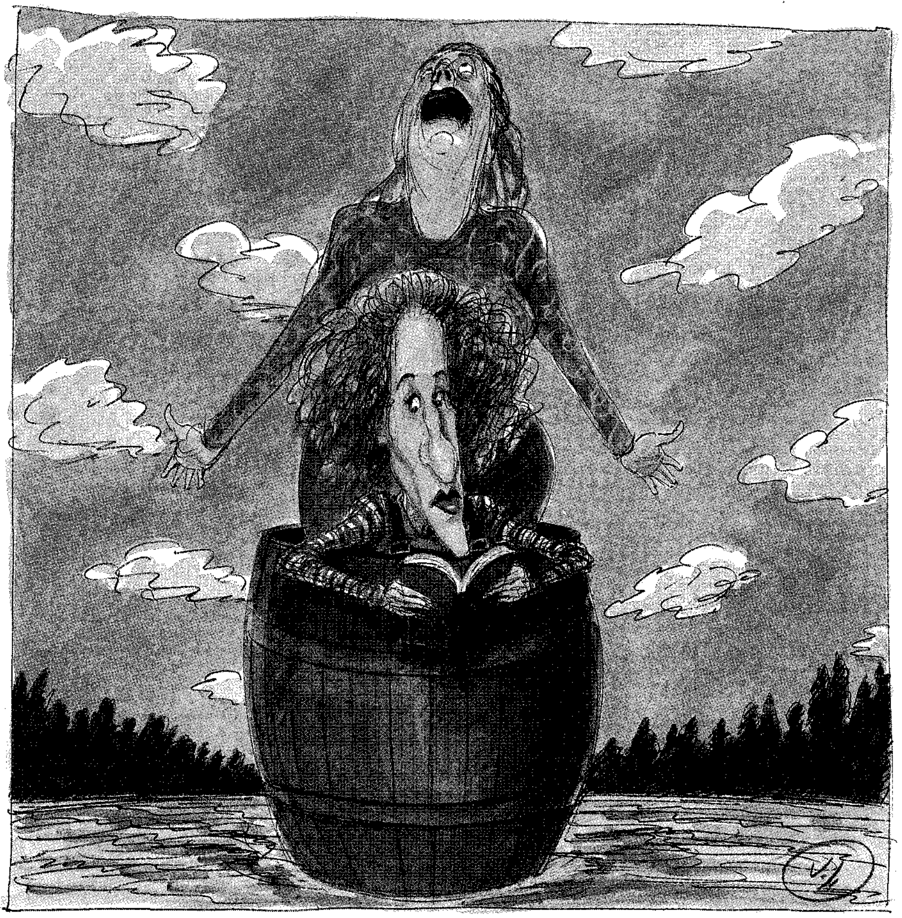


*Sarah Jessica Parker and Kristine Nielsen in "Wonder of the World."*

VICTOR JUHASZ

**MAMMA MIA!**
Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus's musical, set on a mythical Greek island, employs the songs of their defunct rock band, Abba. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 563-5544.)

**THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO**
Once again, David Herskovits and his Target Margin Theatre triumphantly re-create a classic. In this case, it's the Beaumarchais play on which the opera was based, newly translated by "the company." Miranda Hoffman's bawdily elegant costumes set the tone for the production right away, with a combination of modern and eighteenth-century elements which parallels the script's similarly successful amalgamation of a classic, poetic translation and modern, slangier language. The actors—all terrific—make it clear that they know they're playing a farce, and yet their pain and confusion as the plots and counterplots unfold are just as convincing as their knowing asides. And Mr. Herskovits's ability to focus all the intelligence and high energy on display makes this a vivid, funny, rich, and even relevant evening. (Ohio Theatre, 66 Wooster St. 358-3657.)

**METAMORPHOSES**
Ovid said "All things change, nothing perishes," and Mary Zimmerman's fluid and beautiful interpretation of several legends from his fifteen-book history of the world is reassuring proof. Her modern staging, which charmingly and wittily incorporates both original and colloquial language and costumes that range across time, confirms the enduring and elemental power of myth. Here—on a stark set composed only of a large crystal chandelier, a battered manorial door, a suspended image of sky and clouds, and an oblong, twenty-seven-foot pool—real love, thwarted, begets love in other forms; kindness is rewarded in unexpected ways; and evil often backfires. But sometimes the good are punished and the bad triumph, because even the gods in charge surrender to flawed human emotion. A tonic for anyone who needs to believe that terrible events can transform us. (Second Stage, 307 W. 43rd St. 246-4422.)

**MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING**
It's gimmick Shakespeare, and it really works. The accomplished Aquila Theatre Company has set the Bard's comic examination of trust, mistrust, and sharp-tongued singles destined for couplehood in London in an "Avengers"-influenced Swinging Sixties. The men wear bowlers and sharp Savile Row suits, the women are smart and slinky in black vinyl. The story is advanced with the help of some go-go choreography, and "Hey Nonny Nonny" sung to a bossa-nova beat is just plain cool. What is not at all tricked up is the language, which is beautifully spoken, dramatically revealing, and crystalline in effect. (Manhattan Ensemble Theatre, 55 Mercer St. 239-6200.)

**OEDIPUS REX**
Sophocles' tragedy, in condensed form, from the Metropolitan Playhouse. (220 E. 4th St. 995-5302.)

**PUPPETRY OF THE PENIS**
David Friend and Simon Morley bring their "genital origami" from the West End to New York by way of Australia, where the show originated in 1996. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

**RAVE MOM**
In her latest work, the performance artist Ann Magnuson examines Ecstasy, aging, and Silicon Alley. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave. at 9th St. 477-5288.)

**REBEL WITHOUT A PAUSE**
The performance artist Reno, in her latest show. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710.)

**REEFER MADNESS**
The 1936 film about the evils of weed has been turned into a musical by Kevin Murphy (lyrics and book) and Dan Studney (music and book). With choreography by Paula Abdul. Andy Fickman is the director. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

**RUDE ENTERTAINMENT**
Three one-acts by Paul Rudnick ("Mr. Charles, Currently of Palm Beach," "Very Special Needs," and "On the Fence"). (Greenwich House, 27 Barrow St. 239-6200.)

**SAVE IT FOR THE STAGE: THE LIFE OF REILLY**
Charles Nelson Reilly performs an autobiographical one-man show. (Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737.)

**THE SHAPE OF THINGS**
Gretchen Mol, Paul Rudd, Rachel Weisz, and Frederick Weller are in the cast of the Almeida Theatre Company staging of Neil LaBute's latest play. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

**TICK, TICK . . . BOOM!**
The title represents the late author Jonathan Larson's fear of time running out on his musical dreams. The show is set on the eve of the composer's thirtieth birthday—his *Walpurgisnacht*—as he is caught between the pressures to succeed and to settle. The slick, hardworking cast of three is well directed by Scott Schwartz, and, with Larson's plotline deftly reworked by David Auburn, the production has a fetching modesty and reveals Larson's idiosyncrasy, energy, and promise. (7/9/01) (Jane Street Theatre, 113 Jane St. 239-6200.)

**UNWRAP YOUR CANDY**
From Doug Wright ("Quills") a quartet of dark comedies about parenthood, childhood, secrets, and theatregoing. Leslie Lyles, Reg Rogers, Henry Stram, Michi Barall, and Darren Pettie are in the cast. (Vineyard, 108 E. 15th St. 353-0303.)

**URINETOWN**
The amount of fun to be had at this musical, by Greg Kotis (book and lyrics) and Mark Hollmann (music and lyrics), is in direct proportion to the unpleasantness of the title. Its central idea is that an evil corporation controls all the toilets in a city that bears some resemblance to New York, but you don't have to rack your brains about the ramifications of that any more than the authors did; the show is really no more and no less than a terrifically spirited sendup of musicals and their conventions, as self-conscious and gag-happy as a Warner Bros. cartoon (not only does a sign saying "Secret Hideout" hang above a secret hideout, the sign has an arrow on it). John Cullum, Jeff McCarthy, Nancy Opel, and Spencer Kayden lead the uniformly wonderful cast, which is under the direction of John Rando, and John Carraga is responsible for the clever musical staging. (10/1/01) (Henry Miller, 124 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.)

## LONG RUNS

**AIDA**
Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4747.

**BEAUTY AND THE BEAST**
Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4747.

**BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES**
Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370.

**CABARET**
Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 239-6200.

**CHICAGO**
Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

**DE LA GUARDA**
Daryl Roth, 20 Union Sq. E., at 15th St. 239-6200.

**CONTACT**
Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.

**THE FANTASTICKS**
Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.

**FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 2001: A SPOOF ODYSSEY**
Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.

**42ND STREET**
Ford Center, 213 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.

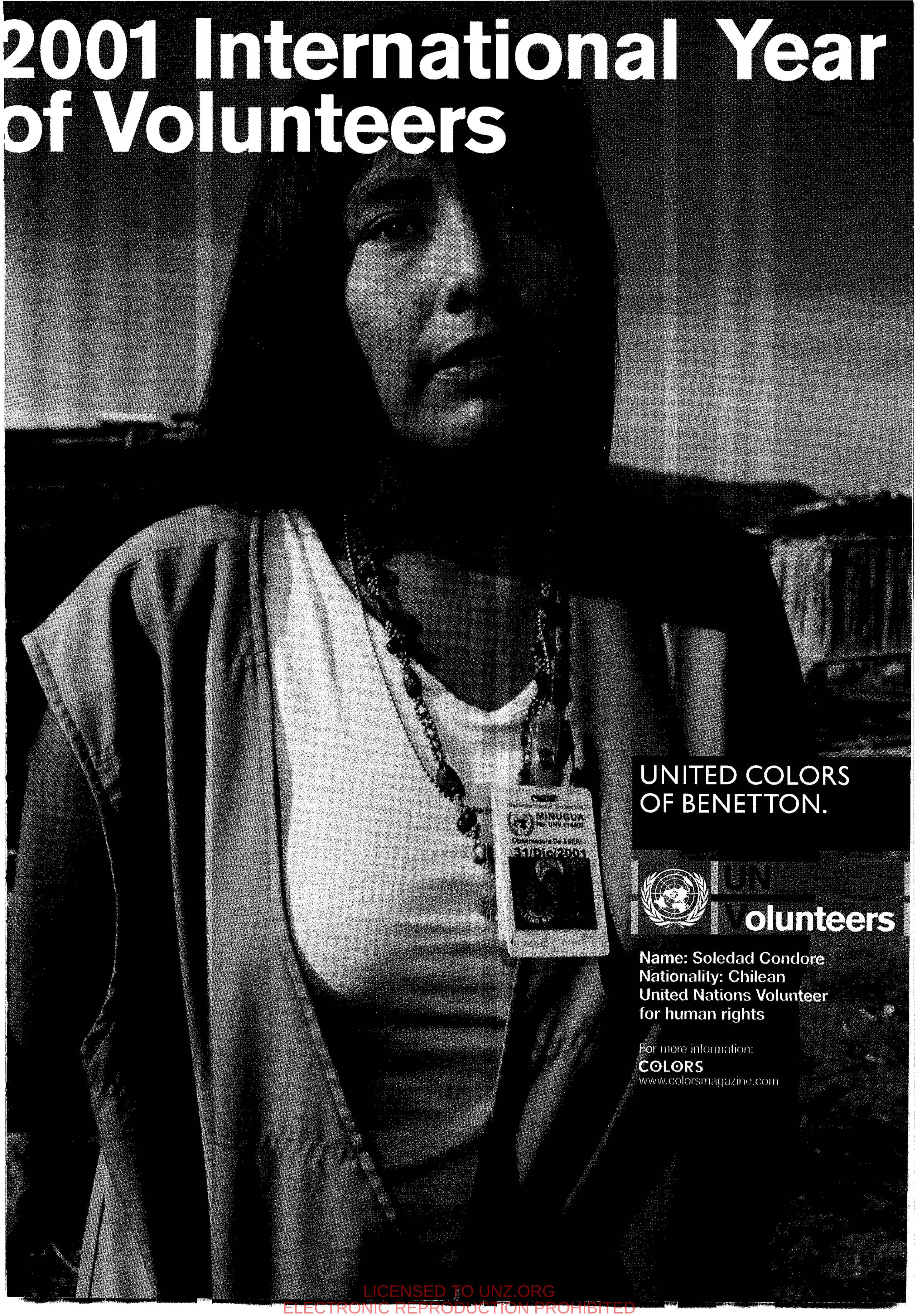
**THE FULL MONTY**
Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.

**KISS ME, KATE**
Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.

**THE LION KING**
New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.

**LOVE, JANIS**
Village Theatre, 158 Bleecker St. 307-4100.

**LES MISÉRABLES**
Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.



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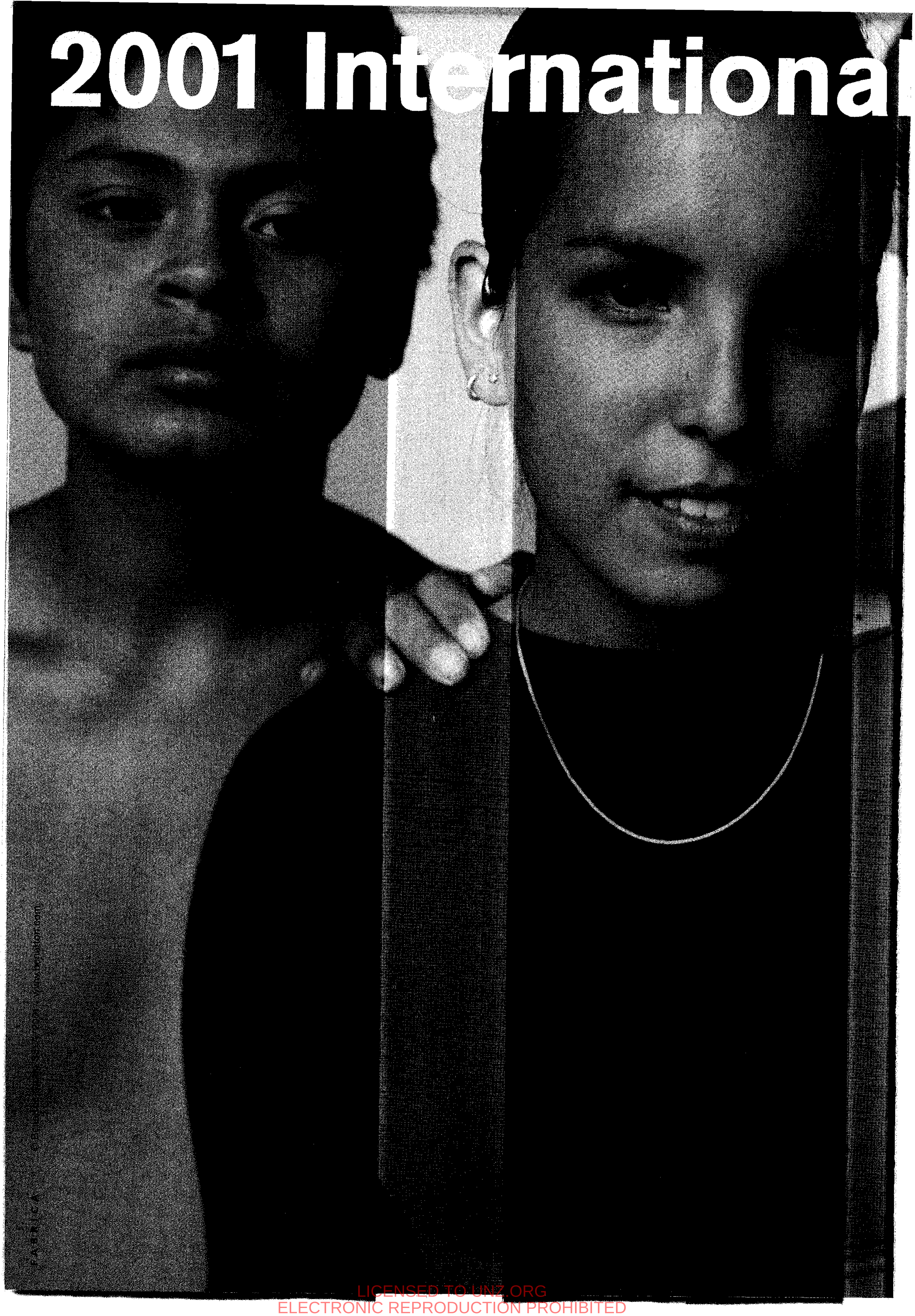
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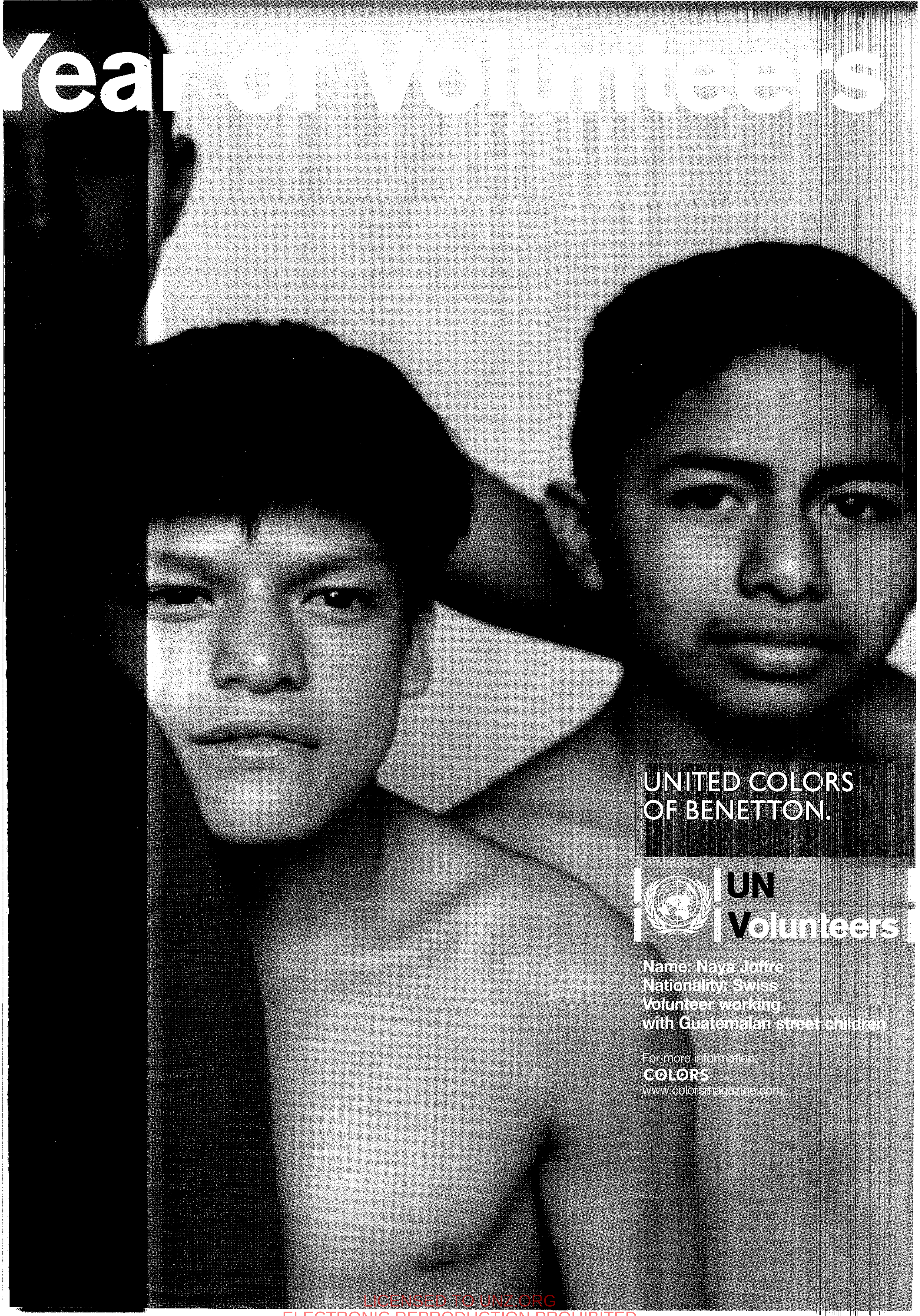

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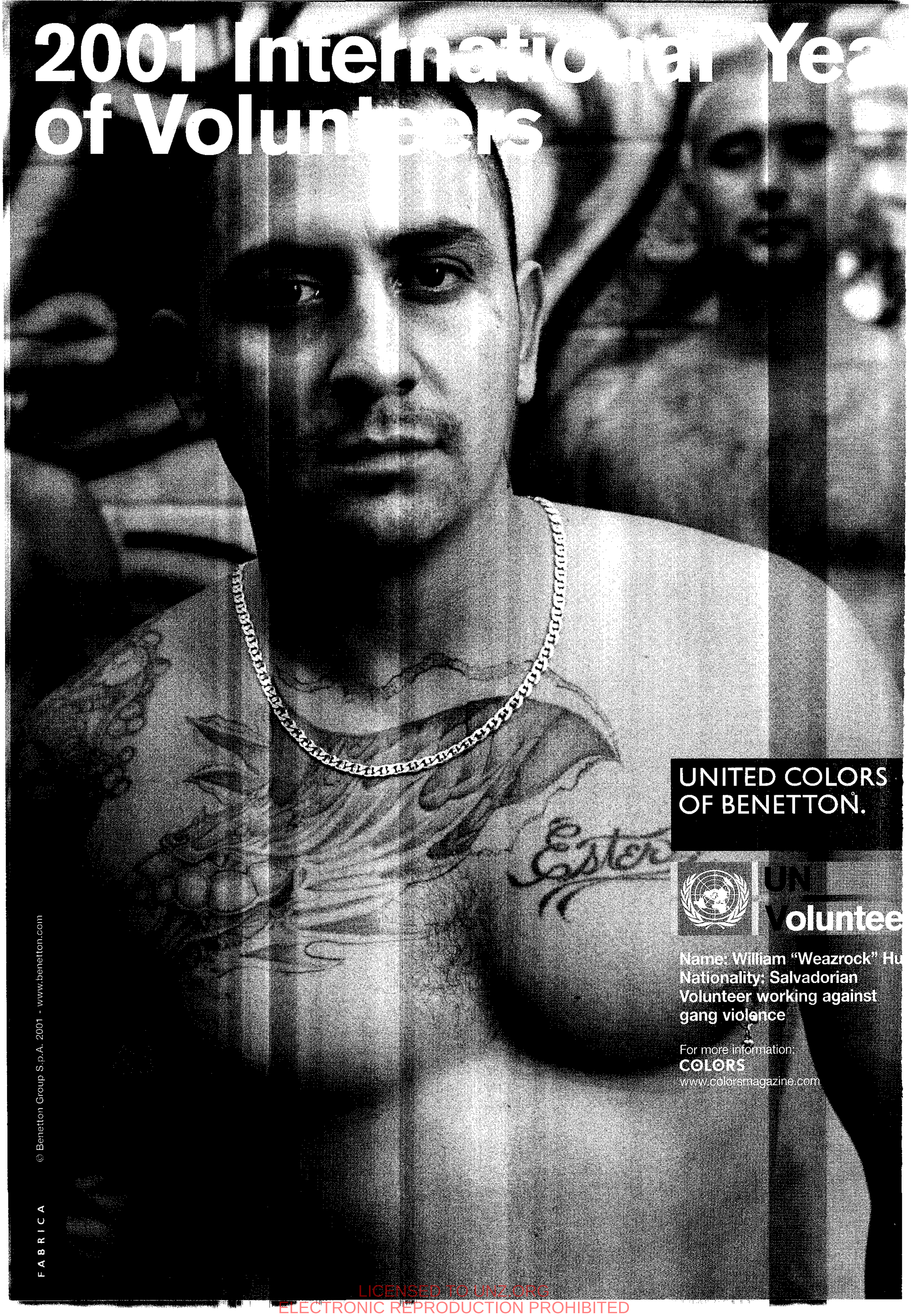

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**Name: William "Weazrock" Hu**
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FABRICA

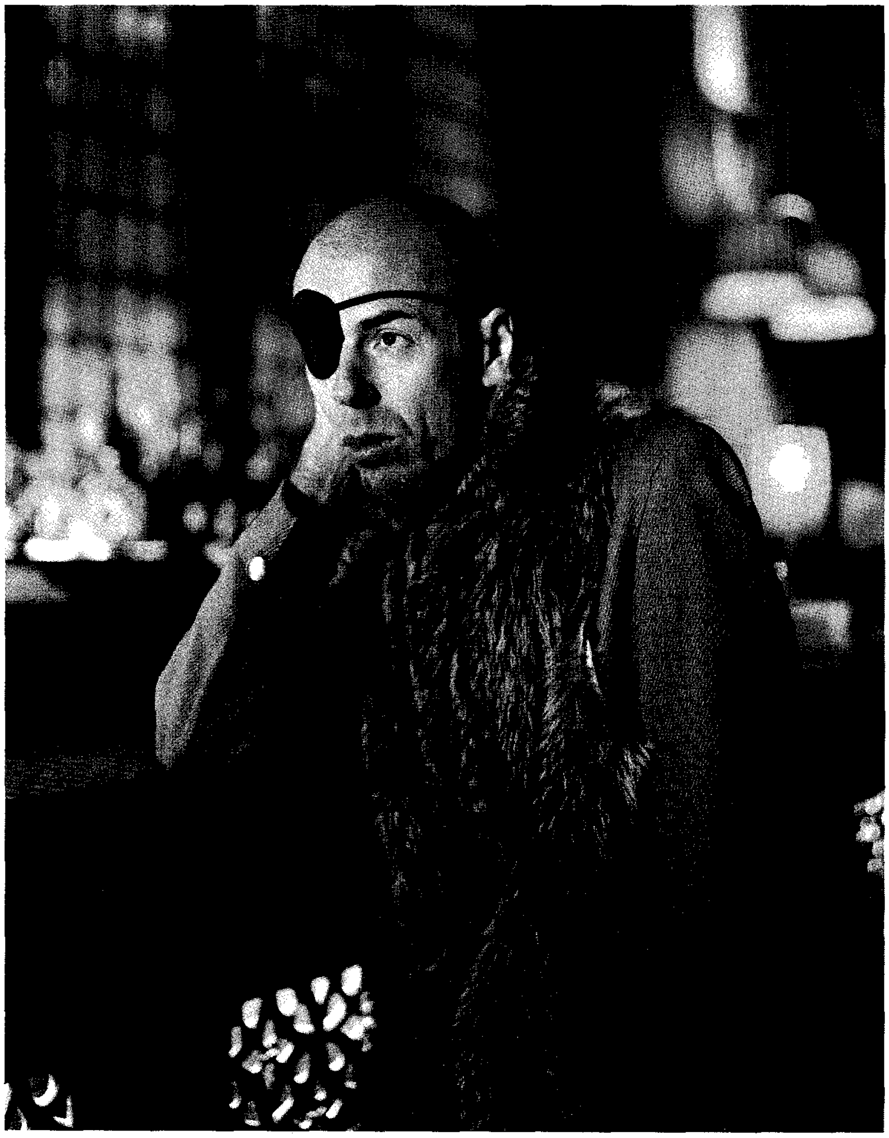
**THE MUSIC MAN**
Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.
**PERFECT CRIME**
Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401.
**THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA**
Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.
**THE PRODUCERS**
St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.
**PROOF**
Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.
**RENT**
Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000.
**STOMP**
Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.
**THE SYRINGA TREE**
Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 307-4100.
**THE TALE OF THE ALLERGIST'S WIFE**
Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.
**THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES**
Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.

## DANCE

**AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE**
For its two-week fall season, the company offers, among other works, five performances of the 1943 Antony Tudor ballet "Dim Lustre," in which a couple spends an evening at the ball waltzing into their past and taking up again with former lovers. The dance's steps move backward, too—"in the opposite direction from what dancers expect," says David Richardson, who performed in the New York City Ballet's production in 1969, over which Tudor presided. The choreographer's rehearsal method was unusual. "He might take the dancer on a journey that made her look ridiculous on the way to something else," Richardson says. As the rehearsal director for the current production, Richardson hasn't taken up Tudor's coaching style. "I wouldn't know how to put the dancers through that kind of misery," he says. Oct. 23 at 7: The opening gala. ♦ Oct. 24 at 8: "Black Tuesday," "Sylvia Pas de Deux," "Esmeralda Pas de Deux," and "Symphony in C." ♦ Oct. 25 at 8: "Bruch Violin Concerto," "Clear," and "Rodeo." ♦ Oct. 26 at 8: "Black Tuesday," "Dim Lustre," and "Symphony in C." ♦ Oct. 27 at 11:30 A.M.: Excerpts from "Symphony in C," "Marimba," and "Clear." ♦ Oct. 27 at 2: "Bruch Violin Concerto," "Dim Lustre," and "Rodeo." ♦ Oct. 27 at 8: "Clear," "Sylvia Pas de Deux," "Manon Pas de Deux," "Esmeralda Pas de Deux," and "Jabula." ♦ Oct. 28 at 2: "Black Tuesday," "Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux," "Diana and Acteon," and "Rodeo." ♦ Oct. 28 at 7:30: "Bruch Violin Concerto," "Clear," and "Jabula." ♦ Oct. 30 at 8: "Clear," "Gong," "Esmeralda Pas de Deux," and "Marimba." (City Center, 155 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Through Nov. 4.)
**BANGARRA DANCE THEATRE**
The thirteen-member company performs a full-length work, "Corroboree," with traditional Aboriginal dances and songs from the Munyarryun clan from Arnhem Land, in Australia's Northern Territory. The work re-creates a gathering to evoke Dreamtime. (BAM's Harvey Theatre, 651 Fulton Ave., Brooklyn. 718-636-4100. Oct. 24-27 at 7:30.)
**PARSONS DANCE COMPANY**
The ten-member troupe premières "Kind of Blue," Parsons' tribute to Miles Davis. The two programs in the two-week engagement also include new works by former Parsons dancer Robert Battle. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Oct. 23-26 at 8, Oct. 27 at 2 and 8, and Oct. 28 at 2 and 7:30.)
**"THE LOOK OF LOVE"**
The choreographer Doug Elkins creates a series of vignettes set to a medley of Burt Bacharach tunes. The program concludes with a dance-off in which Elkins's seven-member troupe faces off with club dancers on the concert stage. (Dance Theatre Workshop at The Duke, 229 W. 42nd St. 924-0077. Oct. 24-27 at 8 and Oct. 28 at 3.)
**"FIX, RUSH, LOOSE IN FLIGHT"**
"Imagine that your body is quiet and filled with sand, which falls through your shoulders, elbows, and wrists to the floor from large pores in your fingers, then is sucked up to the ceiling, making a sandstorm. That's kathak," the twenty-seven-year-old London dancer and choreographer Akram Khan says, describing the rhythmically intricate north-Indian classical dance form that he began studying at the age of seven. "Clarity within chaos," he says, is also at the root of the kathak-influenced modern dances that he and his three-member troupe will be performing at the Kitchen. "It's quite a new language, and we're at a very early stage, but people are excited by it." (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. at Tenth Ave. 255-5793. Oct. 24-27 at 8.)
**RANDOM DANCE CO.**
The London-based dance troupe presents "The Trilogy," which condenses three evening-length works—"The Millennarium (Water)," "Sulphur 16 (Fire)," and "Aeon (Earth/Air)"—into a single multimedia piece that supplements the choreography of director Wayne McGregor with digital and projection works. (Danspace Project, St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. Oct. 25-26 at 8:30 and Oct. 27 at 7:30.)
**"GROUP EXPERIENCE"**
The choreographer Sarah Michelson leads a group of collaborators which includes Miguel Gutierrez, Parker Lutz, Cheryl Thierren, and Adrienne Truscott. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Oct. 25-28 at 8:30. Through Nov. 11.)

## NIGHT LIFE
## CONCERTS

**U2**
The Emerald Isle's favorite sons return to the city with songs from their latest album, "All That You Can't Leave Behind." In their current incarnation, as a stripped-down rock-and-roll band, U2 forgo the postmodernist trickery that preoccupied them in the nineties, instead offering a mix of rousing anthems and sweeping ballads. (Madison Square Garden. 307-7171. Oct. 24-25 and Oct. 27 at 8. ♦ Continental Airlines Arena, the Meadowlands. 212-307-7171. Oct. 28 at 7:30.)
**"THE NEXT WAVE OF SONG"**
The Brooklyn Academy of Music's Next Wave festival presents a delightful triple bill of highly individualized singers. **Me'Shell Ndegéocello, Beth Orton,** and **Rufus Wainwright** will each peform solo sets in the Howard Gilman Opera House. (30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn. 718-636-4100. Oct. 25 at 7:30.)
**SPIRITUALIZED**
The band is beloved by barely conscious stoners for its lengthy, dronelike mantras and thinly veiled (if veiled at all) paeans to drug use, and its leader, Jason (Spaceman) Pierce (formerly of the British band Spacemen 3), had in the past made no bones about his experience with recreational pharmaceuticals. Pierce's latest album, "Let It Come Down," however, finds Spiritualized eclipsing mere spaced-out guitar rock by embracing a full orchestra and



*The Scottish-born singer who goes by the name of Momus, at the Knitting Factory.*

JESSICA WYNNE

gospel choir, which makes this venue an apt choice. (Riverside Church, Riverside Dr. at 120th St. 307-7171. Oct. 25 at 8:30.)

**"IRISH TRADITIONAL MUSIC AT THE BLARNEY STAR"**
The long-running Friday-night concert series at the Blarney Star has moved, temporarily, from its lower-Manhattan home to the Irish Arts Center. This week's show brings in the team of the New Jersey flutist Brian Holleran and the County Antrim singer and bouzouki player Terry McKee. The music will return to the Blarney Star when conditions permit. (553 W. 51st St. 757-3318. Oct. 26 at 10.)

**"CUBA Y PUERTO RICO SON . . ."**
A triple bill of music from the Caribbean basin, with the famous Cuban dance band **Los Van Van** and, from Puerto Rico, the salsa veteran **Andy Montañez** and **Roberto Roena y Su Apollo Sound.** (Theatre at Madison Square Garden. 307-7171. Oct. 27 at 8.)

**FRED HERSCH**
A near-peerless interpreter of composers ranging from Richard Rodgers and Alex North to Billy Strayhorn, Bill Evans, and Ornette Coleman, the pianist Hersch recently released the triple-CD epic "Songs Without Words," which featured his own compositions. Unsurprisingly, Hersch's tunes reflect the lyrical and polished textures of his poetic playing. This is a solo performance, and Hersch, an old hand at transforming any performance space into an intimate salon, can be expected to mesmerize. (Pro Piano, 85 Jane St. 206-8794. Oct. 28 at 4.)

**BLACK CROWES**
The seventies-flavored Southern-fried retro rock of the Robinson brothers, who flagrantly pine for the days of Zeppelinesque hedonism. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Oct. 29 at 8.)

## CLUBS

*Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.*

**BOWERY BALLROOM**
6 Delancey St. (533-2111)—Oct. 25: After a decade or so of embracing heavily experimental electronic productions, the wispy neo-folk singer **Suzanne Vega** returns to the sparse, distinctive sound that brought her fame with the 1987 hit "Luka." Her latest album, "Songs in Red and Gray," is on the bleak side, too. Where "Luka" addressed child abuse, her new album is mostly concerned with her divorce from the producer Mitchell Froom. Oct. 30: The charmingly enigmatic singer Chan Marshall, who goes by the name **Cat Power.**

**IRVING PLAZA**
17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—Oct. 24: After leaving the seminal country-punk trio Uncle Tupelo some six years ago, and spending the time kicking around with his group Son Volt, the singer and guitarist **Jay Farrar** has finally issued his first solo album, "Sebastopol." The opening act is **Anders Parker,** the leader of the indie-rock collective Varnaline. Oct. 25: A night of techno-laden jam-band music with Toronto's **New Deal.**

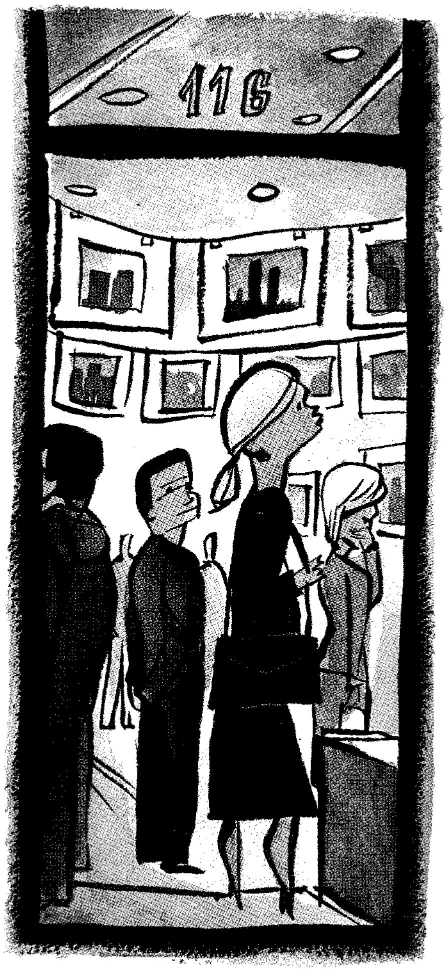
**JOE'S PUB**
425 Lafayette St. (539-8777)—Oct. 26: **Grant Lee Phillips,** a canny and difficult to define songwriter who was the brains behind the criminally overlooked band Grant Lee Buffalo, produces some of the most affecting music you'll never hear on commercial radio.

**KNITTING FACTORY**
74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Oct. 26-27: The Scottish-born singer and rabble-rouser Nick Currie took his alias, **Momus,** from the Greek god of criticism and mockery. He lists Rabelais and Martial among his songwriting influences (with a smattering of Matthew Barney and Kubrick's "A Clockwork Orange"), and his music—from Brecht to Beck on Moog and simulated harpsichord—is challenging. Heard live, his obscurities coalesce and his sharp wit and smooth rap seduce. And his songs, by the way, are quite dirty, as might be expected of someone who goes in for "The Decameron," too. With the witty pop of the Berlin-based **Stereo Total** and the bedroom-as-recording-studio lo-fi sensibility of **Tara Jane O'Neil.** Oct. 27 early show: **Grant Lee Phillips** (see Joe's Pub).

**TONIC**
107 Norfolk St. (358-7503)—Oct. 26: Brooklyn's **Barbez** binds together *musette,* tango, punk, and Slavic folk music to create Brecht-flecked café rock for sophisticated audiences. A small, potent Russian singer and an exquisite violinist (along with the occasional guest cellist and a dancer) add to the dramatic resonance. Sharing the bill is **Faun Fables.** The brainchild of the extraordinary Oakland-based singer and yodeler Dawn McCarthy, who performs eerie, Appalachian-tinged confessionals marked by spellbinding honesty. One of the most gifted singers performing today, McCarthy suggests what the next world might sound like. She's joined by her multitalented musical partner Nils Frykdahl, who'll play flute and guitar.

**VILLAGE UNDERGROUND**
130 W. 3rd St. (777-7745)—Oct. 30-31: **Me'Shell Ndegéocello** (see Concerts—"The Next Wave of Song").

**WARSAW**
261 Driggs Ave., Brooklyn (718-387-5252)—Oct. 26: Born from the ashes of the equally hushed Galaxie 500, Dean Wareham's **Luna** proves that you don't have to make a big noise to make a big splash. A longtime favorite of the Lower East Side music scene, Luna has built a substantial following based on its endearing, double-guitar music, which is full of nods to its downtown Manhattan forefathers, the Velvet Underground and Television.



HERE IS NEW YORK *To rate the images of the events of September 11th would be to engage in the old New York habits of connoisseurship and critical distance—antiquated concepts in this fragile, brave new world. In SoHo, at the site of the old Agnès B. shop, Michael Shulan, Alice Rose George, and the photographer Gilles Peress have organized an exhibition of photographs, with contributors ranging from Magnum stars to unknown kids on the street. Each attempts to show what the heart wants the eyes to avoid: devastation, and the stories of the dead.—Hilton Als*

MARCELLUS HALL

## JAZZ AND STANDARDS

**BIRDLAND**
315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—Oct. 24-25: Newly signed to a major jazz label, the guitarist **Mark Whitfield** is getting another chance to strut his exceptional technical skills and deep-blues feel after having lost his way in the marketplace for the past few years. Oct. 26-27: If Jimmy Scott, Andy Bey, and Bill Henderson arose phoenixlike to fly again, what's to stop the singer **Jackie Paris?** An associate of Charles Mingus decades ago, Paris can still show us what authentic bebop vocalizing is all about. Dining.

**BLUE NOTE**
131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through Oct. 28: **Tuck and Patti.** He plays guitar—lots of it—and she sings; together the deceptively minimal husband-and-wife team of Tuck Andress and Patti Cathcart have built a core fan base that swears by their well-turned treatments of standards, pop tunes, and original numbers.

**CARLYLE HOTEL**
Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound pastel murals, and the magisterially puckish **Bobby Short.** Mondays belong to **Woody Allen and the Eddie Davis New Orleans Jazz Band.** ♦ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **Barbara Carroll** is in attendance.

**FEINSTEIN'S AT THE REGENCY**
540 Park Ave., at 61st St. (339-4095)—Through Nov. 3: **Ann Hampton Callaway** swings on everything from "Route 66" to Ella Fitzgerald's scat classic "Mr. Paganini," and she swings hard. But she can also find the mellow core of "Good Morning Heartache," "In the Wee Small Hours," and "Tenderly." This fervent and funny vocalist is accompanied by an expert jazz ensemble featuring, this week, the pianist **Benny Greene** (the illustrious Kenny Barron steps in the week after) and the fine saxophonist and singer **Lance Bryant,** who joins Callaway for an affecting "For All We Know" in tribute to Ray Charles and Betty Carter.

**IRIDIUM**
1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (582-2121)—Through Oct. 28: Give the saxophonist **Lee Konitz** a drummer and a single harmony instrument for support (and often he will forgo one or the other) and step out of the way. For this engagement, the superior improviser releases his exacting melodic statements in the company of two superior younger players, the downtown music regulars **Joey Barron** on drums and **Marc Ribot** on guitar. Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.**

**KNITTING FACTORY**
74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Oct. 26-27: The bassist **Mark Helias** has something special going with the saxophonist **Tony Malaby** and the drummer **Tom Rainey.** The aptly named band Open Loose gives all three cohorts plenty of room to engage in rigorous collective improvisation. But Helias is no slouch as a composer, and his post-Ornette tunes suggest an indelible blueprint for the free-ranging interplay.

**VILLAGE VANGUARD**
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—**Eric Alexander** (here with his quartet through Oct. 28) means business. This rough-and-ready tenor saxophonist draws on the Chicago horn tradition of his home town, channelling the energy, authority, and tonal girth of players like Johnny Griffin and Gene Ammons without aping their styles. You don't go to hear Alexander expecting innovation or experimentation—basic hard bop is his strength. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

## ART
## MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

**METROPOLITAN MUSEUM**
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—**"Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Drawings and Prints."** Long perusal of this show will install the genius of the sixteenth-century Netherlander in your mind like mystery software. Fifty of Bruegel's sixty-one known drawings, many of them paired with the engravings (by other talented hands) for which they were designs, range from acutely poetic landscapes to surreal fantasies that were influenced by Hieronymous Bosch. Bruegel's teeming incarnations of vice and folly are every bit as wild and cruel as Bosch's, but funnier. (A monkey pulling down the pants of a sleeping man holds its nose: "Phew!") While taking the dimmest possible views of human character, he embraced raw human energy with a zest that feels all-forgiving. His landscapes comprehend the grandeur and the scraggliness of nature in equal measure. The show offers a vivid crash course in connoisseurship, documenting recent scholarly successes at carving the true Bruegels from a mass of longstanding misattributions. Discovered amid the castoffs are two wonderful anonymous artists—dubbed the Master of the Mountain Landscapes and the Master of the Small Landscapes—who merit fan clubs of their own. Through Dec. 2. ♦ For **"Caspar David Friedrich: Moonwatchers,"** the Met presents seventeen paintings and two works on paper, many of which ("Two Men Contemplating the Moon," "Man and Woman Contemplating the Moon," etc.) capture the German artist at his most Romantic. Through Nov. 11. ♦ **"Along the Nile: Early Photographs of Egypt"** documents nineteenth-century Egypt—the pyramids of Giza, the temples of Karnak, Luxor, and Abu Simbel—in forty-three well-preserved prints from the eighteen-forties and fifties. Through Dec. 30. ♦ **"Paul Signac 1863-1935: Master Neo-Impressionist."** Through Dec. 30. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

**MUSEUM OF MODERN ART**
11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—An exhibition devoted to Alberto Giacometti includes forty paintings, sixty drawings, and ninety sculptures, including works done before he discovered his signature attenuated style. Through Jan. 8. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 5:45; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:15.)

**GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM**
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—**"Brazil: Body and Soul"** looks at that country's artistic, cultural, and religious traditions, with representative artifacts of every era from the Age of Exploration on, with a focus on baroque and twentieth-century works. Opens Oct. 19. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 9 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 9 to 8.)

**WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART**
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—For this site-specific installation, Arturo Herrera has painted the museum's windows with vertical channels of crimson, as if dangling a ribbon from Snow White's hair. The mural also evokes color-field painting—the fluid veils of Morris Louis solidified or the hard-edged forms of Ellsworth Kelly softened and compressed. Through Dec. 9. ♦ **"Sharon Harper: Photographs from the Floating World"** includes black-and-white images of rural scenes taken from a high-speed train, as well as images of clouds in metallic tones. The exhibition inaugurates the Whitney's "First Exposure" series, dedicated to the museum débuts of young photographers. Through Jan. 6. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6, Fridays, 1 to 9.)

**AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY**
Central Park W. at 79th St. (769-5100)—**"Meeting God: Elements of Hindu Devotion"** shows the rituals, prayers, customs, and festivals of Hinduism in more than seventy-five photographs, talismans, and video portraits. Accompanied by **"Meeting God,"** an exhibition of photographs of office shrines, taken around New York. Through Feb. 24. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

**AMERICAN FOLK ART MUSEUM**
Columbus Ave. at 65th St. (977-7170)—**"Quilted Constructions: The Spirit of Design."** Many of the textiles incorporate a digital photo-transfer process, replacing the conventional embroidered squares with images of everything from Swedish chairs (an openwork lattice by grand-prize winner Marta Amundson) to an orange in various stages of unpeel (by Barbara Barrick McKie). But technical innovations pale in the presence of a beautiful quilt by Setsuko Obi made of vintage Japanese fabrics. Twenty-four years in the making, it looks stitched from a starry night sky. Through Jan. 13. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11:30 to 7:30.)

**JAPAN SOCIETY**
333 E. 47th St. (832-1155)—The first three sections of **"Traditional Japanese Design: Five Tastes"** are so similar that it is hard to tell where one ends and another begins. *Kodai no bi* ("ancient times"), *sobuku* ("artless simplicity"), and *wabi* ("Zen austerity") are all represented by simple, largely neutral-toned pots, teapots, and accessories that differ more in their history and ascending levels of intellectual refinement than in any design characteristics. The first dramatic visual break comes with *karei* ("gorgeous splendor"), the decorative aesthetic of the noble warrior élite, who tended toward heavily patterned fabrics and mixed metals. One elaborate suit of armor includes a mask molded to the shape of a face, its screaming mouth lined with a bristly white mustache and tiny goatee. Next door, the coquettish, urban *iki* ("Edo chic") may feel most familiar to New Yorkers. It combines aspects of the others, disguising and scrambling the trappings of wealth by, for instance, hiding luxurious materials inside plain garments. The small tobacco pouches and inro boxes here would be at home on the arm of many a downtown geisha. Through Jan. 6. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 11 to 6; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 5.)

**NEW MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART**
583 Broadway (219-1222)—Spaghetti, garbage bags, and toothpaste may sound like a trip to the corner deli to most, but to Tom Friedman they're the stuff of sculpture. The alchemical artist transforms the everyday materials into art whose happy appearance belies its obsessive process. One self-portrait is carved onto a single aspirin. A blank piece of paper was stared at for a thousand hours, and that box of pasta was transformed into a 3-D rendition of a child's scribble—wet noodles attached end to end. Through Feb. 3. (Open Wednesdays and Sundays, noon to 6; Thursdays through Saturdays, noon to 8.)

## GALLERIES—UPTOWN

*Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.*

**WILLIAM BAZIOTES**
The Greek-American artist (1912-63) was a little too impressionable for his own good. In these spare biomorphic watercolors, you can see him sifting through memories of Miró, Matisse, and Picasso in ways that recall other members of his Abstract Expressionist generation—Gorky, de Kooning, and Milton Avery. The atmosphere of indebtedness can be distracting, but the images themselves—strange radiant shapes like anvils and brassieres—are seldom less than beautiful. Through Nov. 3. (Helman, 20 W. 57th St. 245-2888.)

**DAVID HOCKNEY AND HENRI MATISSE**
This delightful collection of ink, pencil, and charcoal portraits casts the Yorkshireman and the Frenchman together in a fresh light. In the end though, the

SOUL STIRRIN' SOUNDS AND STORIES
SAY IT LOUD!
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From Bebop to Hip Hop, a groundbreaking multi-media tribute to the most influential black artists of the century.
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connection boils down to a single drawing. Hockney's 1984 ink portrait "Celia" obviously borrows the swooshy open contours of neighboring Matisse odalisques. But it feels like an impersonation, a one-off. Elsewhere, Hockney's amazing line—so attentive, lithe, economical—leaves no doubt about its provenance. Picasso is still the ghost in the Rapidograph. Through Nov. 10. (Artemis Greenberg Van Doren, 730 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 445-0444.)

### *Short List*

**WILLEM DE KOONING AND JOHN CHAMBERLAIN**
Pace Wildenstein, 32 E. 57th St. 421-3292.
Through Oct. 27.
**RAYMOND HAN**
Forum, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 355-4545.
Through Nov. 3.
**GERHARD RICHTER**
Marion Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. 977-7160.
Through Oct. 27.

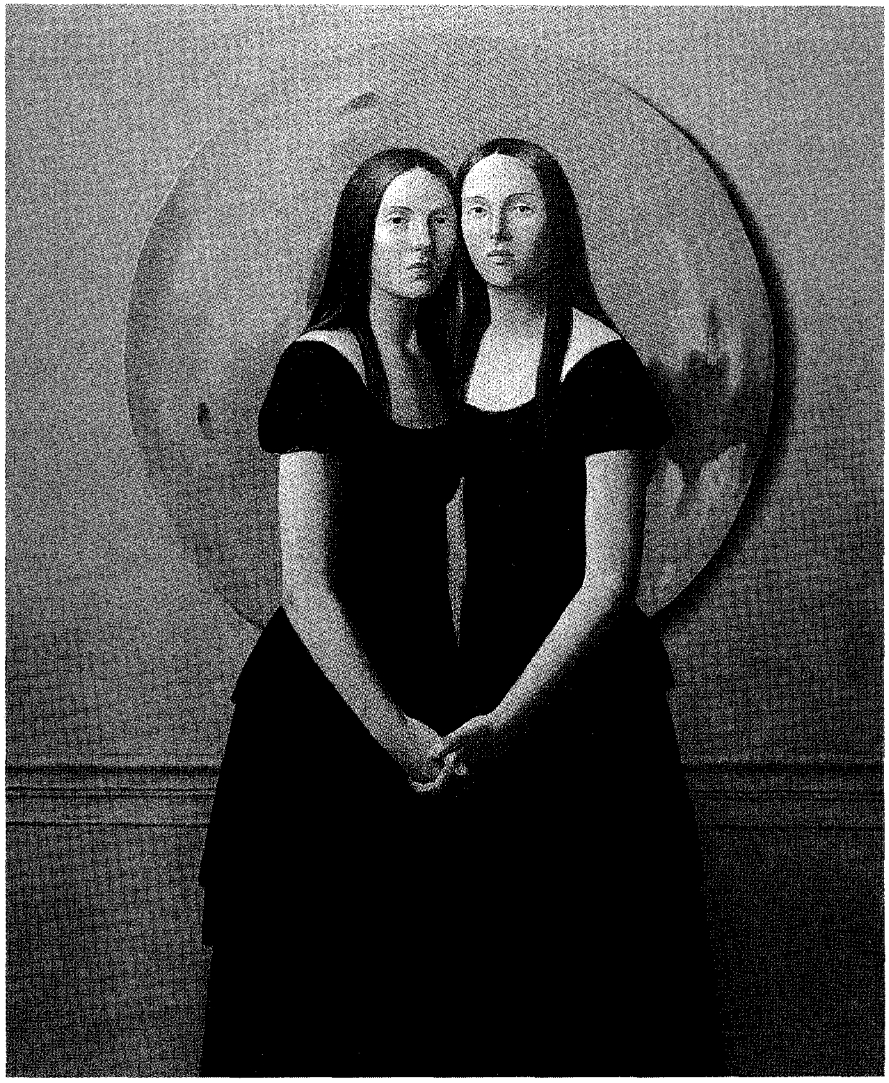
## GALLERIES–CHELSEA

**KEVIN APPEL**
The collision of computers and architecture seems almost de rigueur for young painters these days (Ben Edwards, Julie Mehretu, Jay Davis, et al.). In his New York début, this talented Los Angeles painter follows suit with airy paintings based on computer-generated renderings that blend interiors and landscape. Though conceived digitally, the paintings are clearly handmade; translucent veils of celadon (think "trees") contrast with hard-edged swaths of opaque white paint suggesting ceilings, floors, and columns. All six works in the main gallery share the same restricted palette, reinforcing links to minimalism (Ryman's palette knife, Marden's predilection for green) and evincing a tendency toward monotony. Through Nov. 3. (Boesky, 535 W. 22nd St. 680-9889.)

**TILL FREIWALD**
The German painter's oversized mug shots remain startlingly, blandly beautiful. Freiwald's youngish subjects stare impassively out at us, their features rendered in edgeless watercolor washes. The technique alone is breathtaking; one is struck by a pleasurably vexing desire to know exactly how they were made. But the pictures are also calming and even eerie, hovering between Nancy Burson-ish anonymity and Chuck Close-like specificity. Through Nov. 10. (Shainman, 513 W. 20th St. 645-1701.)

**JANE HAMMOND**
Eight years ago the artist commissioned poet John Ashbery to craft titles for her unmade paintings, a collaboration that concludes with the twelve works in this show. Hammond's elaborate imagery is drawn from a personal lexicon of approximately two hundred and seventy found images, ranging from Gandhi's head to Buddha's feet. In "Irregular Plural #5," a garish green Mahatma floats across from a jaunty yellow Picasso (not to mention a blood-red wishbone and a mehndi-patterned hand). The canvas may be shaped like an open book, but with enough cryptic symbols to keep a crew of Jungians working round the clock Hammond's work is anything but. Through Oct. 27. (Galerie Lelong, 528 W. 26th St. 315-0470.)

**MORRIS LOUIS**
Eight big stain pictures by the Washingtonian (1912-62) arrive in time for the current revival of interest in color-field painting, a movement that has been held in low esteem for too long. Louis was onto something with his plastic paints poured across raw canvas: a way of freely drawing with pure colors on a grand scale. At best, as with the roughly symmetrical dollops that flank an empty center in "Lambda II," the effect is as thrilling as trumpets in the morning. But not all or even many of Louis's ideas for exploiting the stain technique satisfy. The sheer variety of forced lyrical motifs betrays shaky conviction; the inventor seems a mite intimidated by his own invention. But even his failures re-create the dramatic intensity of abstract painting's last inning. Once a warm white, the forty-year-old cotton canvases have ripened to an elegiac beige. Through Nov. 24. (Kasmin, 293 Tenth Ave., at 26th St. 563-4474.)



DOUBLE VISION *In Raymond Han's new show at Forum, a master of still-life invests the human figure with the dreamlike disquietude of a latter-day Balthus. Are the two young women in "Dark Ladies and Tondo" twins, mannequins, a split personality, a study in ovals and circles, or a contemporary double vision of Shakespeare's muse?*

**VICTOR PESCE / CAROL PEREIRA**
Pesce's modest, principled still-lifes are like American cousins of the works of the Londoner Euan Uglow. Working in Morandi territory, both artists bring a counterintuitive freshness to the kind of simple arrangements of bottles, boxes, and shrivelled fruit that have appeared in a thousand art-school classrooms. Here, Pesce's seductive drabness contrasts happily with Pereira's silk installations, which spill out onto the floor in crumpling trains. Her hot pinks and limes and purples suggest collapsed hot-air balloons or palette spills: an inert, disorderly loveliness. Through Nov. 10. (Harris, 529 W. 20th St. 463-9666.)

**JAMES SIENA**
A favorite of downtown art buffs, Siena shows more of his freehand geometries painted on small, slim aluminum panels, along with an excitingly exploratory suite of drawings. Siena creates grids or nests of lines, squares, squiggles, within vibrant patterns that veer between doodly spontaneity and Tantric rigor. His peculiar color schemes—pink, blue, purple, and cream white, for example, or white, purple, lavender, and two reds—surprise and caress. How often does one encounter a finicky sensibility that is never fussy? Through Nov. 10. (Gorney Bravin & Lee, 534 W. 26th St., 352-8372.)

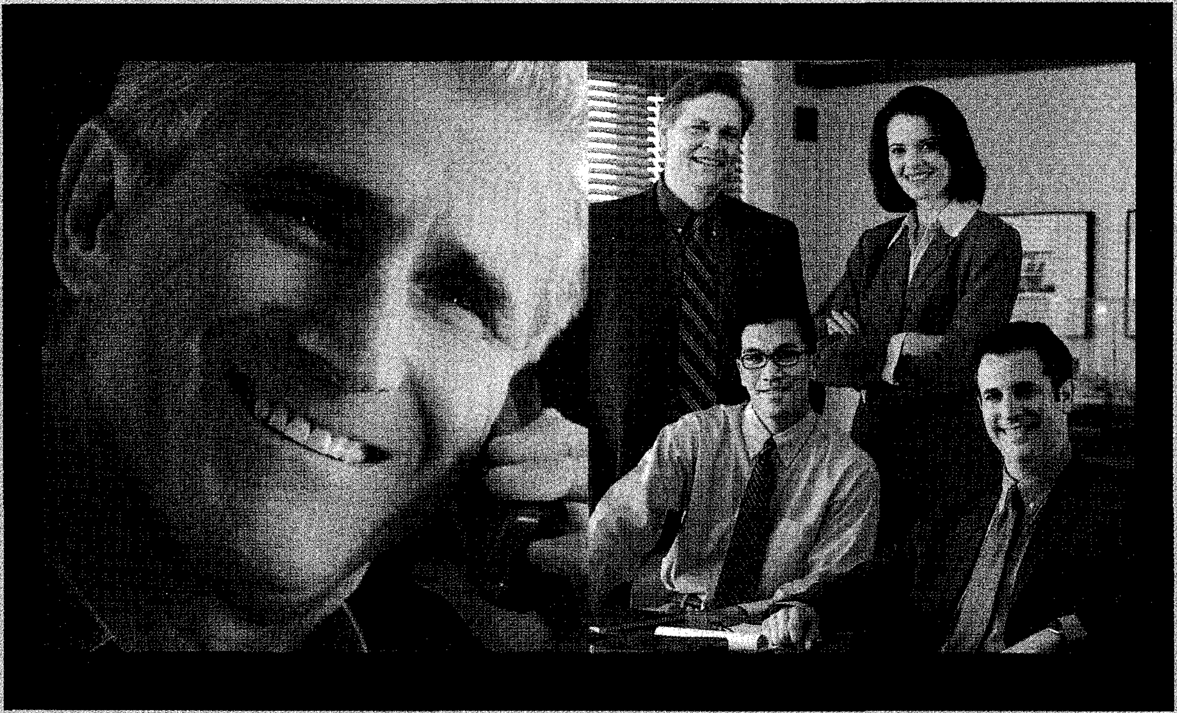
### *Short List*

**ELIZABETH PEYTON**
Gavin Brown's Enterprise, 436 W. 15th St.
627-5258. Through Nov. 17.
**RODNEY GRAHAM**
303 Gallery, 525 W. 22nd St. 255-1121.
Through Nov. 3.

## GALLERIES–DOWNTOWN

**CARROLL DUNHAM**
The master of "kid id" offers an amazingly repetitive assortment of drawings. All feature his signature phallic puppet, a sort of X-rated version of Mr. Potato Head. And all are drawn with a rash, blotchy line that seems perfectly suited to his ill-behaved aesthetic. If you like Dunham (his fellow baby boomers almost invariably do), it's because his work feels so egregiously infantile: he's made a career out of channelling his inner brat. Through Oct. 27. (Nolan Eckman, 560 Broadway. 925-6190.)

**CATHERINE MURPHY**
One of our most distinguished realist painters, Murphy continues her perverse pursuit of subjects that seem better suited to photography. In this show, they include her own palm, a page of a crumpled diary, a stained tablecloth, and the interior of a paper bag. All are seen close up and are rendered



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AND: A calendar of
*New Yorker* events
across the country

with an exacting, radiant probity. Murphy's eye never skims, but neither does it play favorites, and the result is a kind of eerie evenness that feels utterly contemporary, even when the subjects don't quite yield up their private significance. Through Nov. 3. (Lennon Weinberg, 560 Broadway. 941-0012.)

### *Short List*

**NICOLA DE MARIA**
Sperone Westwater, 121 Greene St. 431-3685.
Through Oct. 27.
**REBECCA PURDUM**
Tilton/Kustera, 49 Greene St. 941-1775.
Through Oct. 27.

## AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

**SOTHEBY'S**
Oct. 27 at 2: English furniture and works of art, including ceramics, tapestries, and carpets. A Louis XVI ormolu-mounted *secrétaire en cabinet*, purchased by Baron Gustave de Rothschild in the late nineteenth century, is a highlight of the sale; two oval pen-and-ink drawings of idyllic scenes (by J.-B. Huet and J.-B. Leprince) adorn the front exterior. ♦ Oct. 29 at 6:30 and Oct. 30 at 10:15 A.M.: In coöperation with Stack's Rare Coins, the house offers the famed "Dallas Bank" collection of U.S. gold coins assembled by the late Texas businessman H. Jeff Browning. Two "double eagle" twenty-dollar coins (each with a representation of the goddess of liberty) stand out in this extraordinary collection. The first is one of twenty-one known examples of the 1907 ultra-high-relief coin (widely considered to be the most beautiful U.S. coin in existence), designed by Augustus Saint-Gaudens at the request of Theodore Roosevelt; the second is one of only two known examples of the 1861 Philadelphia Mint coin designed by Longacre and Paquet. Each is expected to sell for more than six hundred thousand dollars. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)
**CHRISTIE'S**
Oct. 24 at 10 A.M. and 2: A sale of watches from the nineteen-thirties to the present by Patek Philippe, Rolex, Cartier, and Audemars Piguet. An eighteen-karat gold dual-crown world-time wristwatch by Patek Philippe, once retailed by Tiffany & Co., is the highlight of the sale. ♦ Oct. 26 at 10 A.M. and 2: "Arts of France," the house's annual sale of French furniture, porcelain, and works of art, features a number of items that formerly belonged to the businessman André Meyer. ♦ Oct. 29 at 2: Books and manuscripts. ♦ Oct. 30 at 10 A.M. and 2: A sale of prints from the nineteenth century to the present. The afternoon session includes works by Goya and Bruce Nauman. ♦ Oct. 30 at 5: A sale of fine wine. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 636-2000.)
**CHRISTIE'S EAST**
Oct. 30 at 10 A.M. and 2: European art works from the nineteenth century. (219 E. 67th St. 606-0400.)
**SWANN**
Oct. 25 at 10:30 A.M.: An auction of books on travel and exploration dating back to the sixteenth century, including works on Tibet, Central Asia, the Middle East, and the Indian subcontinent. A third edition of "A Voyage Towards the South Pole and Round the World" (from 1779), the official account of Captain James Cook's second voyage to the South Pacific, is a highlight of the sale. ♦ Oct. 30 at 6: "Magic." The auction features more than a hundred lots of photographs, postcards, letters, and other memorabilia relating to Harry Houdini, including a copy of the magician's book "Miracle Mongers and Their Methods," inscribed to his brother Dash. The book is estimated to bring as much as thirty thousand dollars. (104 E. 25th St. 254-4710.)

## PHOTOGRAPHY

**AMY ARBUS**
From 1980 to 1991, Arbus had a standing assignment to photograph the denizens of downtown New York for the *Village Voice*. Her straightforward por-

## BOOK CURRENTS

### *School's In!*

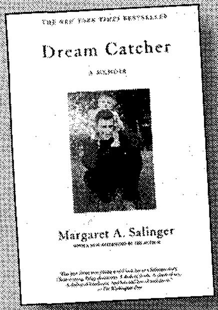
With the school year already well under way, a crop of new books examine the world of textbooks and lesson plans. In **"DOING SCHOOL"** (Yale), Denise Clark Pope tracks five students in a wealthy California suburb and discovers teen-agers who borrow strategies from the business world, "multi-tasking" French homework in math class and "establishing allies" among teachers and administrators. One eleventh grader longs for the Ivy League education that might enable her to become "a successful $500,000-a-year doctor or engineer or whatever it is I want to be."

In 1999, Elinor Burkett spent a year in a Minnesota suburb that boasted a superior American high school. In **ANOTHER PLANET** (HarperCollins), she describes a place where one in three seniors believes that Shakespeare came from "France, Germany or Italy" and almost the same number could not name a single right guaranteed by the First Amendment. According to Burkett, the welter of demands from parents, reformers, and politicians have led to impossible contradictions: a seventh-grade boy is expelled for walking out of a classroom with a pair of scissors, while a convicted murderer is allowed to return for pre-prom festivities.

Instead of joining the crowded debate about school reform, the parents in Mitchell L. Stevens' **KINGDOM OF CHILDREN** (Princeton) opted out by choosing to educate their kids at home. Stevens stresses the diversity of the estimated one million homeschooled American students, who include fundamentalist Christians, atheists, Muslims, Mormons, and Buddhists; their parents range from those who say that their "first and highest goal for our kids is to love our Lord" to ones with more diffuse strategies. "Right now," a mother says, "I'm just letting him do whatever he wants."

—*Nell Freudenberger*

STEPHEN SAVAGE


The New York Times Bestseller
Dream Catcher
A Memoir
Margaret A. Salinger

# TRANSITION

Growing up is tough enough, but when your father is the infamously reclusive author of *The Catcher in the Rye*, it can get really complicated. Margaret Salinger's memoir evokes the universal experience of discovering who we are.

***DREAM CATCHER: A MEMOIR***
**by Margaret A. Salinger**
Pub. Price: $16.00
Our Price: $12.80
**Readers' Advantage Price: $11.52**

# TEDDY

Previously available only in an out-of-print eight-volume edition, the letters of Theodore Roosevelt are now accessible in a single volume compendium. The more than 1,000 letters illuminate both the public and private sides of T.R.

***THE SELECTED LETTERS OF THEODORE ROOSEVELT***
**edited by H.W. Brands**
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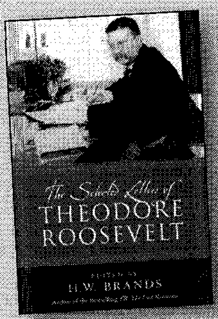
**Readers' Advantage Price: $23.04**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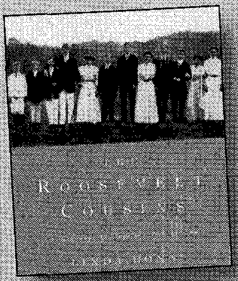
The Roosevelt Cousins
Linda Donn

# THRONG

Though eclipsed by the fame of FDR and Eleanor, a generation of Roosevelts grew up together on Hudson Valley and Long Island estates. Linda Donn chronicles their stories, including their sometimes thwarted ambitions for public service.

***THE ROOSEVELT COUSINS: GROWING UP TOGETHER 1882-1924***
**by Linda Donn**
Pub. Price: $30.00
Our Price: $24.00
**Readers' Advantage Price: $21.60**

# TWENTIETH

Noted historian Martin Gilbert provides a panoramic account of Jews in the twentieth century—from the continuing diaspora around the world to the horror of genocide to the rebirth of Israel. Includes more than 500 compelling photos.

***THE JEWS IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY: AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY***
**by Martin Gilbert**
Pub. Price: $50.00
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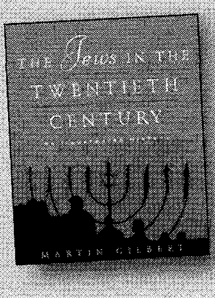
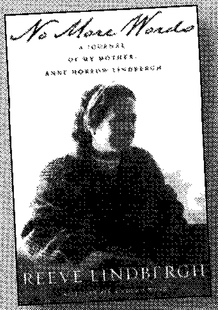
**Readers' Advantage Price: $36.00**


The Jews in the Twentieth Century
Martin Gilbert


No More Words
A Journal of My Mother, Anne Morrow Lindbergh
Reeve Lindbergh

# TACIT

Reeve Lindbergh's memoir surrounding the last year of her mother's life explores the difficulties of failing health and a child's anxiety of caring for an elderly parent, particularly one suffering from brain dysfunction.

***NO MORE WORDS: A JOURNAL OF MY MOTHER, ANNE MORROW LINDBERGH***
**by Reeve Lindbergh**
Pub. Price: $24.00
Our Price: $19.20
**Readers' Advantage Price: $17.28**

# TIMID

The details of Emily Dickinson's life have proven as perplexing as the genius of her verse. The first solidly *documented* account of her life puts Dickinson in the context of her times and gives us a clear idea of what she was really like.

***MY WARS ARE LAID AWAY IN BOOKS: THE LIFE OF EMILY DICKINSON***
**by Alfred Habegger**
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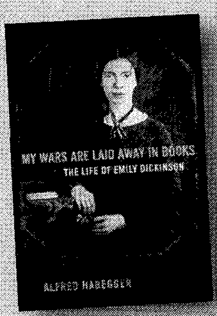
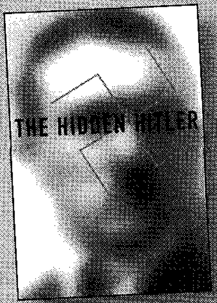

My Wars Are Laid Away in Books
The Life of Emily Dickinson
Alfred Habegger


The Hidden Hitler

# TYRANT

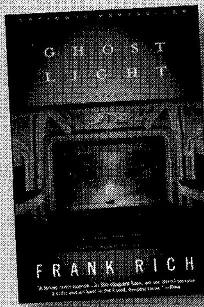
Drawing from recently discovered archival material and new interviews, Lothar Machtan vividly recreates the personal life of Adolph Hitler as witnessed by the influential circle of friends and colleagues who surrounded him.

***THE HIDDEN HITLER***
**by Lothar Machtan**
Pub. Price: $26.00
Our Price: $20.80
**Readers' Advantage Price: $18.72**

# THEATRE

New York Times columnist and former theatre critic Frank Rich recalls how his discovery of musical theatre helped him cope with the pain and loneliness of his *parents'* divorce against the backdrop of Washington, D.C. during the 50s and 60s.

***GHOST LIGHT: A MEMOIR***
**by Frank Rich**
Pub. Price: $13.95
Our Price: $11.16
**Readers' Advantage Price: $10.04**


Ghost Light
Frank Rich

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Prices effective at store locations through 11/4/01 traiture seems intended to be upstaged by her subjects and their extravagant outfits—big hair, painted leather, animal prints, and heavy jewelry were the order of the day. Celebrity appearances include Susanne Bartsch in a "TitsSuit" with round patch pockets over her breasts, and a pre-famous Madonna in pajamas and a stained vintage overcoat. Through Nov. 14. (Bateman, 560 Broadway. 925-7951.)

**THOMAS FLORSCHUETZ**
Florschuetz's sensitive and often surprising images of modern architecture, which look sidelong at a granite wall and record a mirrored surface, or observe a plate-glass window and note a lone tree reflected in it, defy the dry typology of contemporary German photographers like Thomas Struth and Andreas Gursky. They have more in common with the witty and spontaneous work shown at MOMA's historic "Mirrors and Windows" exhibit, in 1978. Their charm is particularly remarkable for the starkness of their subjects, Mies van der Rohe's reconstructed Barcelona Pavilion and the Museo Archeologico in Naples. Through Nov. 10. (Tatintsian, 526 W. 26th St. 633-0110.)

N. ASCENCIOS

*The Metropolitan Museum presents Sammartini's opera "Memet" on October 27.*

N. ASCENCIOS

**JACQUELINE HASSINK**
Hassink has photographed the meeting tables of multinational corporations and European queens. This project, "Female Power Stations: Queen Bees," offers a series of diptychs of the office conference rooms and home dining rooms of female Fortune 500 executives. It is not *House Beautiful*: the empty sets of Hassink's subjects' lives are shot matter-of-factly, as the economic and social equipment for their professional and social positions. The images are displayed split-screen style in heavy wooden frames that mimic the conservative furniture shown. Several of those frames are missing a dining-room scene—of the fourteen women who agreed to participate, some refused at the outset to let the photographer come to their homes, and others backed out later. Through Nov. 1. (Scalo, 560 Broadway. 334-9393.)

**HELMUT NEWTON**
This small show, timed to coincide with Newton's full-scale retrospective at the International Center of Photography, listed below, offers material similar to the I.C.P.'s in subject if not in texture—nudes in high heels, several women with one breast covered and the other exposed, and celebrities, including a barely clad Raquel Welch, in "In Her Garden, Beverly Hills" (1981). The work is less imposing in these new and vintage prints, which vary from twelve by sixteen inches to twenty by twenty-four, than it is in the I.C.P.'s mural-size panoramas, but a change of scale can't make it tame or humble. Through Oct. 27. (Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway. 966-6223.)

**BARBARA POLLACK**
Pollack's last New York exhibit—of photographs of her husband and son, printed in various sizes and shades—satirized the snapshots and anthropological documents in Steichen's "Family of Man." This new project turns a job chaperoning her son's middle-school dance into a meditation on the work of paparazzi. "The kids loved it," she says. "They're from the generation where it's not life if it's not being recorded, so they said 'Now we can have a real party, like we see on MTV.'" The blurred movement caught by her long exposures looks less like dancing than fidgeting, which Pollack sees as relevant to all generations: "The subject perfectly parallels my own social anxieties." Through Nov. 24. (Esso, 211 W. 28th St. 560-9728.)

**HELLEN VAN MEENE**
Van Meene's past subjects have been predominantly Dutch; these new portraits document a two-month trip to Japan. Her formula of photographing teen-age girls under natural light confirms that adolescent awkwardness is as universal as one might expect—the new subjects can blow bubble-gum bubbles and hang upside down off the sides of beds with the best of them. Through Oct. 27. (Marks, 523 W. 24th St. 243-0200.)

**INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY**
1133 Sixth Ave., at 43rd St. 860-1777—**Helmut Newton** was most recently in the spotlight with the 2000 release of his sixty-six-pound book, "Sumo," which came with its own Philippe Starck table. He's back with this retrospective, curated by his wife. Through Dec. 30. ♦ **"The Construction of the Paris Opera: Photographs of Delmaet and Durandelle"** and **" 'Greed' and Other Recent Acquisitions"** will also be on show through Dec. 30. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10-5; Fridays, 10-8; Saturdays and Sundays, 10-6.)

## *Short List*

**NIKKI S. LEE**
Tonkonow, 535 W. 22nd St. 255-8450.
Through Dec. 1.

**SHEILA METZNER**
Stevenson, 338 W. 23rd St. 352-0070.
Through Oct. 30.

**NICHOLAS NIXON**
Zabriskie, 41 E. 57th St. 752-1223.
Through Nov. 24.

**"HERE IS NEW YORK"**
Here Is New York, 116 Prince St. 334-6684.
Through Oct. 28.

**"101 BOOKS"**
Roth Horowitz, 160A E. 70th St. 717-9067.
Through Nov. 3.

*See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the American Museum of Natural History.*

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# CLASSICAL MUSIC
## OPERA

**METROPOLITAN OPERA**
**"La Bohème,"** with Patricia Racette, Emily Pulley, Ramón Vargas, and Bruno Caproni; Carlo Rizzi conducts. (Oct. 24 at 8 and Oct. 27 at 1:30.) ♦ With Inva Mula replacing Pulley. (Oct. 29 at 8.) ♦ The last performance of the season of Mozart's **"Idomeneo,"** featuring Dawn Upshaw, Carol Vaness, Susan Graham, and Plácido Domingo; James Levine. (Oct. 25 at 7:30.) ♦ The sublime melodies of Bellini's **"Norma"** are always wonderful to hear, but the piece, extraordinarily difficult to cast, has not been performed at the Met in twenty years. (Lilli Lehmann, the first to sing it at the company, in 1890, remarked that it was easier to sing three Brünnhildes than one Norma.) Jane Eaglen, not always in full control of her capacious voice, makes an adequate though imperfect Norma, while Dolora Zajick brings spectacular vocalism to the role of Adalgisa. Carlo Rizzi's conducting, efficient as usual, rarely catches fire. (Oct. 27 at 8.) ♦ James Levine conducts the première of a new production of Verdi's **"Luisa Miller,"** with Marina Mescheriakova, Denyce Graves, Neil Shicoff, Nikolai Putilin, Hao Jiang Tian, and Phillip Ens; the production is directed by Elijah Moshinsky, with sets and costumes by Santo Loquasto (making his Met début). (Oct. 26 and Oct. 30 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

**NEW YORK CITY OPERA**
**"The Mikado,"** with Jan Opalach (in the title role), Anna Christy, Myrna Paris, Kirstin Chávez, Keith Jameson, and Richard Suart; Gerald Steichen conducts. (Oct. 24 at 7:30.) ♦ With John Lankston replacing Suart. (Oct. 28 at 1:30.) ♦ James Robertson's fresh and engaging production of **"La Bohème"** returns from last season, with Maria Kanyova, Alexandra Coku, Misha Didyk, and Alfredo Daza; Brent McMunn. (Oct. 25 at 7:30 and Oct. 27 at 8.) ♦ Verdi's **"Macbeth,"** a return of the 1997 production, with Richard Paul Fink in the title role and Lauren Flanigan reprising her role as Lady Macbeth; George Manahan. (Oct. 26 at 8.) ♦ The première of a new production of Monteverdi's **"The Return of Ulysses"** (in a performing edition by Jane Glover), with Phyllis Pancella, Katharine Goeldner, Stephen Powell, and David Adams; Daniel Beckwith. (Oct. 27 at 1:30 and Oct. 30 at 7:30.) (New York State Theatre. 307-4100.)

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**SAMMARTINI'S "MEMET"**
The Metropolitan Museum's Temple of Dendur provides the setting for the first U.S. performance of this fanciful Baroque chamber opera, set in the fifteenth-century Turkish court. Melodically influenced by Vivaldi, "Memet" is noted for its urgent rhythmic drive and keen dramatic sense. Augusto Ciavatta leads the Titano Chamber Orchestra of San Marino and vocal soloists in a semi-staged production, using a newly reconstructed edition of the score. (Sackler Wing, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Oct. 27 at 7.)

## ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

**NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC**
José van Dam, the veteran Belgian baritone, possesses a voice renowned for its warmth, nobility, and suppleness. He sings songs by Duparc and Mahler ("Kindertotenlieder") in a group of concerts that, surprisingly, will comprise his Philharmonic début. Christoph Eschenbach is the guest conductor, rounding off the program with music by Berlioz and Bartók (the Concerto for Orchestra). (Avery Fisher Hall. 721-6500. Oct. 25-27 at 8 and Oct. 30 at 7:30.)

**RIVERSIDE SYMPHONY**
George Rothman, the Riverside's music director, is an advocate for the music of the French-Romanian composer Marius Constant, whose work continues the exotic timbral experiments of Debussy and Ravel. He leads the New York première of "Turner," a symphonic poem inspired by the English painter, along with "Brevissima," a powerful mini-symphony. Music by Bartók (the Piano Concerto No. 2, with Jeremy Denk) and Brahms is also featured. (Alice Tully Hall. 721-6500. Oct. 24 at 8.)

**MARTHA ARGERICH AND THE ORCHESTRE SYMPHONIQUE DE MONTRÉAL**
Argerich, the superlative Argentine pianist, has just begun her series of Carnegie Hall "Perspectives" concerts, collaborative events throughout the season in which she will both perform and supervise the choice of repertory. Oct. 27 at 8: In a tribute to the pianist's homeland, Charles Dutoit conducts music by its two favorite compositional sons, Ginastera and Piazzolla (including the Concerto for Bandoneón and Orchestra, with Daniel Binelli). Argerich rounds off the program with Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto. ♦ Oct. 28 at 2: Dutoit returns to lead Glière's Symphony No. 3 ("Il'ya Muromets," a rarely performed blockbuster of socialist realism), with Argerich playing Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 1 in C Major. (247-7800.)

**RUSSIAN STATE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**
A double bill of Russian piano concertos: Denis Matsuev performs Prokofiev's Third, and Valentina Lisitsa offers Tchaikovsky's First. Valery Polyansky conducts the concert, which concludes with Shostakovich's Symphony No. 5. (Avery Fisher Hall. 721-6500. Oct. 28 at 7:30.)

**LEIPZIG GEWANDHAUS ORCHESTRA**
Herbert Blomstedt, the music director of the legendary German ensemble since 1998 (when he replaced Kurt Masur), leads the group in two concerts at Carnegie Hall. Oct. 29 at 8: Carl Nielsen's lyrical and enigmatic Violin Concerto (with Nikolaj Znaider) shares the program with Brahms's Fourth Symphony. ♦ Oct. 30 at 8: Schubert's Eighth Symphony ("Unfinished") and Bruckner's Ninth. (247-7800.)

## RECITALS

**MICHAEL BORISKIN**
The pianist, a noted specialist in American repertory, plays music by Copland (the commanding "Piano Fantasy") and George Perle. (Great Hall, Cooper Union, Third Ave. at 7th St. 279-4200. Oct. 25 at 7:30.)

**ROBERT ASHLEY / WALTER MARCHETTI**
Ashley, one of America's legendary musical provocateurs, teams up with the baritone Thomas Buckner for "Yes, But Is It Edible?," for voice and piano, on a program that also includes music by Marchetti, an Italian avant-garde composer and pianist, who plays his own work. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. Oct. 25 at 8.)

**MUSICIANS FROM MARLBORO**
Prominent and recent alumni of the legendary summer festival (including the violinist Todd Phillips and the cellist Clancy Newman) present a program of string sextets by Schulhoff and Brahms (the Sextet in B-Flat Major, Op. 18), along with music by Haydn. (Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Oct. 26 at 8.)

**CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER: HAYDN/SCHOENBERG FESTIVAL**
2001 marks the fiftieth anniversary of Arnold Schoenberg's death, and, to the surprise of many, his challenging and vital music is doing better than ever as younger performers, like the velvet-voiced mezzo-soprano Mary Nessinger, take its difficulties in stride. Oct. 26 at 8: In the first of two concerts, Nessinger is the soloist in the lurid Expressionist fantasy "Pierrot Lunaire." For the rest of the program, her colleagues (including the pianist Peter Serkin and the violinist Ida Kavafian) perform Webern's arrangement of Schoenberg's Chamber Symphony No. 1 and a piano trio by Haydn, another great revolutionary of the Viennese tradition. ♦ Oct. 28 at 5: Nessinger returns to recite "Ode to Napoleon Bonaparte," part of a program that includes the Phantasy for Violin and Piano, the Suite, Op. 29, and another Haydn trio. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5788.)

**ST. PETERSBURG CONSERVATORY MUSICIANS**
Students and alumni of Russia's oldest music school present music by Dvořák, Scriabin, Rachmaninoff, and others. (Walter Reade Theatre, 165 W. 65th St. 721-6500. Oct. 28 at 11 A.M.)

**HILARY HAHN**
The violinist, accompanied by Natalie Zhu, offers a recital of sonatas by Brahms, Mozart, Bach (the solo sonata in G Minor), and Saint-Saëns. (Avery Fisher Hall. 721-6500. Oct. 28 at 3.)

**BANG ON A CAN MARATHON**
Twelve ensembles play eight hours of music from across the stylistic spectrum, in what has become a yearly ritual of New York's new-music life. The composers and performers include David Lang, Julia Wolfe, the British rock band Icebreaker, Arnold Dreyblatt's Orchestra of Excited Strings, and, of course, the venerable Bang On a Can All-Stars. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 718-636-4100. Oct. 28, starting at 2.)

**FLANDERS RECORDER QUARTET: "THE ART OF THE FUGUE"**
The ensemble plays contrapuntal music from the sixteenth century to the present, including pieces by Bach, Frescobaldi, and Piet Swerts ("Three Gadgets," from 1999). (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. Oct. 28 at 5.)

**MET CHAMBER ENSEMBLE**
Another Schoenberg anniversary concert, with James Levine's formidable group welcoming the soprano Dawn Upshaw and the pianist Robert Taub as guest artists, featuring "Pierrot Lunaire," the radiant Serenade, Op. 24, and the original version of the Chamber Symphony No. 1. (Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Oct. 28 at 5.)

**ISAAC STERN MEMORIAL CONCERT**
Carnegie Hall presents a tribute to its late president, in the auditorium that bears his name. The musicians include Itzhak Perlman, Emanuel Ax, Midori, and Yo-Yo Ma. (Oct. 30 at 3. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 247-7800.)

**PAUL SPERRY: "SOIRÉE FRANÇAISE"**
The veteran tenor presents a program of songs by Ravel, Satie, Chausson, Gounod, and Ned Rorem. The pianist is Ian Hobson. (Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. Oct. 30 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

## CLASSICAL NOTES

**ASCENDING VOICES**
The mezzo-sopranos Cecilia Bartoli and Anne Sofie von Otter may be worlds apart in temperament—one's Roman fireworks, the other Scandinavian cool—but each has an uncanny ability to turn her immaculate technique to new musical challenges. On **"Dreams and Fables: Gluck Italian Arias"** (Decca), with the brilliant Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, Bartoli's radiant instrument is deeply responsive to the composer's gravitas and subtle nuances of character, bringing tonal richness, explosive diction, and fiery intensity to Gluck's noble, sorrowing heroines. Von Otter, supported by the fortepianist Melvyn Tan, ventures into quieter waters on **"Beethoven, Meyerbeer, Spohr: Lieder"** (Archiv/Deutsche Grammophon). Meyerbeer's songs are teasing, entertaining trifles, but von Otter sings them with such elastic phrasing and range of color that they are elevated to a higher realm. She addresses Beethoven's plainer, more dignified songs with charming delicacy and tact and brings a lustrous style to Spohr's songs (with violin obbligatos by Nils-Erik Sparf), the most romantic of the set.

Jane Eaglen, the current Brünnhilde and Isolde of choice, presents newly recorded repertoire on **"Italian Opera Arias"** (Sony Classical). Unfortunately, the silky accompaniments of the Philharmonia Orchestra, conducted by Carlo Rizzi, are often more persuasive than Eaglen's treatments of famous numbers from "Madama Butterfly," "Tosca," "Adriana Lecouvreur," and other verismo classics: even the magic of the mixing board cannot hide her persistent pitch problems and general lack of lyrical style. **"Casta Diva"** (EMI), the soprano Angela Gheorghiu's album of bel-canto arias with the London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Evelino Pidò, is a more satisfying effort. A smart and elegant singer with an appealing, silvery timbre, she has adapted well to the environment of the recording studio, which has been a major engine of her fame. But Gheorghiu comes close to turning every number into a Callas impersonation—expertly applying her model's dusky, hooded tone—which makes one want to go back to La Divina for the real thing.

*—Russell Platt*

## ABOVE AND BEYOND

**READINGS**
Oct. 24 at 8: By Daniel Scott, from his short-story collection, "Some of Us Have to Get Up in the Morning." (Rocky Sullivan's, 129 Lexington Ave., between 28th and 29th Sts. No tickets necessary.) ♦ Oct. 29 at 8: Derek Walcott, Karl Kirchwey, Chana Bloch, Grace Schulman, Philip Schultz, Leon Wieseltier, and other writers pay tribute to the late poet Yehuda Amichai. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.) ♦ Oct. 30 at 7: By V. S. Naipaul, from his recent work. (Music Building, Queens College, Flushing. For more information, call 718-997-4646.) ♦ Oct. 30 at 7: By Gerald Stern and Anne Marie Macari, from their poetry. (Stella Adler Studio of Acting, 31 W. 27th St. For reservations, which are required, call 689-0087.)

**TALKS**
Oct. 25 at 6: The science reporter Ira Flatow interviews the author Ray Bradbury. (Celeste Bartos Forum, New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. 930-0855.) ♦ Oct. 29 at 8: The actors Rosemary Harris, Michael Allinson, and Barrie Ingham join Elizabeth Sharland for a discussion of her recent book, "The British on Broadway." (Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. For reservations, which are required, call 419-9331.) ♦ Oct. 30 at 6: Dr. Joseph Loizzo, an assistant clinical professor of psychiatry at the Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons, presents a talk titled "Meditation and the Self-Regulation of Learning: A Link Between Health Science and Religion?" (Alumni Auditorium, Health Sciences Campus, Columbia University, 650 W. 168th St. For more information, call 854-9050.)

**TOUR**
Oct. 27 at 10 A.M., 11 A.M., and 1: The Cathedral of St. John the Divine offers pre-Halloween candlelit tours of its crypt. For more information, call 932-7347.

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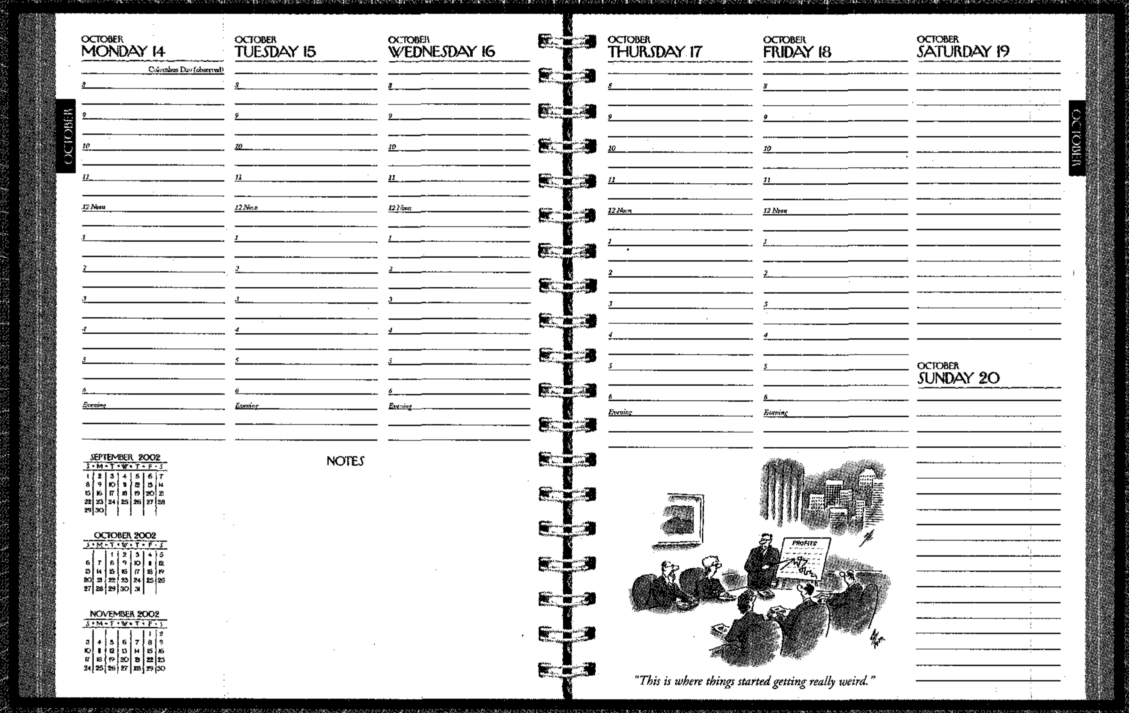
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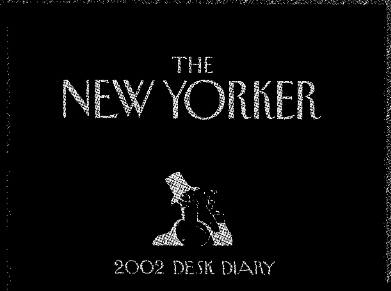
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# MOVIES OPENING

**BETTER THAN SEX**
An Australian romantic comedy about a one-night stand that lasts for three days, featuring a Greek chorus of nosy friends. Opening Oct. 26. (Angelika Film Center.)

**BONES**
Snoop Doggy Dogg plays a ghost who returns to his old neighborhood to exact revenge in this horror movie directed by Ernest Dickerson. Opening Oct. 24.

**DONNIE DARKO**
A satire about suburbia, set in the late nineteen-eighties. Jake Gyllenhaal plays the lead, a disturbed, bright sixteen-year-old. Also with Jena Malone and Patrick Swayze. Opening Oct. 26.

**HISTORY LESSONS**
Barbara Hammer directed this documentary about lesbian images in film, photography, and advertising. Opening Oct. 26. (Quad Cinema.)

**K-PAX**
A drama with Kevin Spacey as a mental patient who believes he's from another planet. Jeff Bridges plays his psychiatrist. Iain Softley directed. Opening Oct. 26.

**LIFE AS A HOUSE**
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Oct. 26.

**ON THE LINE**
Lance Bass and Joey Fatone of 'N Sync star in this romantic comedy set in Chicago. Also with Gregory Qaiyum and Al Green. Opening Oct. 26.

**13 GHOSTS**
A remake of the 1960 William Castle film, in which a father (Tony Shalhoub) and daughter (Shannon Elizabeth) search for buried treasure in a haunted house. Opening Oct. 26.

**THE TOWN IS QUIET**
Robert Guédiguian's drama interweaves the stories of six working-class people living in Marseilles who are connected by drug addiction. With Ariane Ascaride and Julie-Marie Parmentier. In French. Opening Oct. 26.

**TREMBLING BEFORE G-D**
Sandi Simcha DuBowski directed this documentary about gay Hasidic and Orthodox Jews. In English, Hebrew, and Yiddish. Opening Oct. 24. (Film Forum.)

# FILM NOTES

**THE AMERICAN ASTRONAUT**
Cory McAbee's black-and-white feature début (which he wrote, directed, and stars in) has all the quirky kick of a budget-impaired independent film. The story, set in the future, tells of a shipping contractor chased by a deranged killer, but it's just an occasion for McAbee to run wild with his genre-busting ideas. The film is filled with psychotic Astaire-style musical sequences, Three Stooges-esque humor, slimy nightmare imagery, and hilarious Flash Gordon-inspired space scenes. The strange brew may not be to everyone's taste, but there's no mistaking the original and talented point of view McAbee brings to his grab-bag adventure.—*Bruce Diones* (Angelika Film Center.)

**BANDITS**
Bruce Willis as a macho daredevil with thinning long hair and an impassively cool manner; Billy Bob Thornton as a fussbudget hypochondriac who squints and starts and hears bells ringing in his head. They work together as polite, nonviolent bank robbers. But why? God knows we're willing to be amused, but the picture needs a bit more reality in order for us to accept it as a fiction. Some of Billy Bob's tremors are funny, but we never understand what holds these two together. The director, Barry Levinson, wants to cross "Bonnie and Clyde" with "It Happened One Night," but the combination doesn't work. He also makes frequent intercuts to a droning TV news show about the bank robbers, a device that kills the movie's momentum every time. With Cate Blanchett as the madcap married woman who throws in her lot with the two men.—*David Denby* (Chelsea Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Orpheum VII, Union Square, and Ziegfeld.)

**BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN**
This 1935 caricature by some very knowing people is a macabre comedy classic. The monster (Boris Karloff) is the only sympathetic character. James Whale, who had a good gothic sense of humor, directed, with Elsa Lanchester as Mary Shelley in the prologue, and then as the Bride. For many of us, this scene—especially the way she said "Eeeek" in revulsion when she saw her intended—was so satisfyingly silly that whenever we saw Elsa Lanchester in other roles we were likely to break out in a grin of childish pleasure.—*Pauline Kael* (American Museum of the Moving Image; Oct. 27.)

**CHOP SUEY**
Bruce Weber's new picture plays like a home movie filled with his particular pleasures and friends: the hip jazz singer Frances Faye, the jujitsu master Rickson Gracie, and Diana Vreeland, among others. He gives them all room to speak and entertain in the kindest of environments (Vreeland in her opulent apartment, Gracie with his family on the lawn). At the movie's center is the handsome, gap-toothed Peter Johnson, a high-school wrestler whom Weber discovered in Iowa and has been photographing obsessively over the last few years. Weber captures Johnson's adventurousness and innocence with such gentleness and humor that the film, and its myriad subjects, come together to form a deeply personal joyride.—*B.D.* (Film Forum.)

**LA CIÉNAGA**
The title translates as "The Swamp," and here it applies to the claustrophobic confines of a summer mansion and the imploding family that inhabits it, like refugees from a Cheever story. Lucrecia Martel, the Argentinean writer-director, has a gift for domestic detail—the way children talk over each other, the wordless stares, and the kind of mess people make when they never pick up after themselves. Her house is a complicated latticework of servants, cousins, and half-remembered quarrels and affairs. There is little nobility on display; when the family matriarch takes to her bed, her daughters and son spend most of the day beside her. Martel has chosen to shine a light on the accumulated sadness of compromise, a world without grace. It's a bitter, affecting journey. In Spanish.—*Michael Agger* (Cinema Village.)

**DINNER RUSH**
A modestly scaled independent film about a long, long evening of cooking, eating, intrigue, hustle, sex, and murder at a Tribeca trattoria. The movie, well directed by Bob Giraldi, is made up of many little vignettes, most of them incisively written by the team of Rick Shaughnessy and Brian Kalata. Danny Aiello plays the tough-old-pro owner who may give up the place to his son (Edoardo Ballerini), a brilliant chef who has turned the family restaurant into something very chic. With Kirk Acevedo as a compulsive gambler who works as a sous-chef, Sandra Bernhard as a food writer in a wig, and many others. The movie was shot at Gigino, an actual restaurant that Giraldi owns.—*D.D.* (Reviewed in our issue of 10/1/01.) (Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, and Union Square.)

**DON'T SAY A WORD**
Vicious jewel thieves kidnap a smart little girl; her father, a master psychiatrist (Michael Douglas), must wrest a certain bit of information that the thieves want from a young woman (Brittany Murphy) who may or may not be crazy. Meanwhile, the psychiatrist's wife (Famke Janssen) lies in bed with a broken leg and fights off the gang with her crutch. All these not quite fascinating activities take place in an oppressive, gray-blue Manhattan and culminate in a violent fight that goes on forever in the semi-darkness of a graveyard. The movie's gravity is inane; nothing here works. Directed by Gary Fleder.—*D.D.* (Beekman, Chelsea West, Empire 25, Murray Hill Cinemas, Olympia I and II, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, and Union Square.)

**FAT GIRL**
A pitiful title for this gnawing French film, directed by Catherine Breillat, about the love-hate relationship between two teen-age sisters—one beautiful, the other not—during a family summer vacation. For the most part, the film is an artful examination of first love and sexual awakenings, but the tender, quiet scenes have a restless play beneath them. There's a psychological tension to Breillat's neutral style, and she employs it in an unnerving way whether she's filming a graphic love scene, a long drive, or a short, sharp burst of violence. In French.—*B.D.* (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema.)

**FROM HELL**
Allen and Albert Hughes trade in the mean streets of Los Angeles for those of London circa 1888. Their Jack the Ripper movie has its source in a graphic novel by Alan Moore, who delved into the architecture of Nicholas Hawksmoor, the rites of Freemasonry in Victorian England, and other subtexts in order to invent a plausible fiction of who the Ripper may have been. The Hughes brothers take this careful work and tart it up, making it over into a gruesome, blood-soaked spectacle. Johnny Depp, peering through his forelock, is Inspector Fred Abberline, a policeman who finds his suspects in opium dreams. This makes for nice visual montages—including some unforgettable pulsating red grapes—but little in the way of suspense. With Heather Graham, theoretically playing the Irish prostitute Mary Kelly.—*M.A.* (Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, and Village East Cinemas.)

**LA HAINE**
In this paradigm of hate against the underclass begetting hate against the system, the new French lower depths are contained in a mammoth high-rise housing project. Three buddies who live there—a Jew, an Arab, and an African—ping-pong through the project and then Paris, stewing over the police brutality that's sent another friend to the hospital. Although the writer-director, Mathieu Kassovitz, wants to be explosive, his hopped-up shooting and editing techniques can't camouflage a bare-bones message movie. He's trying to send out an SOS that societies complacently adjust to their decline until they crash. But this 1995 film is such a hectic, uncertain combination of posturing and visual gimmicks that it has all the impact of a Benetton ad. In French.—*Michael Sragow* (Florence Gould Hall; Oct. 30.)

**INTIMACY**
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Angelika Film Center and Cinema I.)

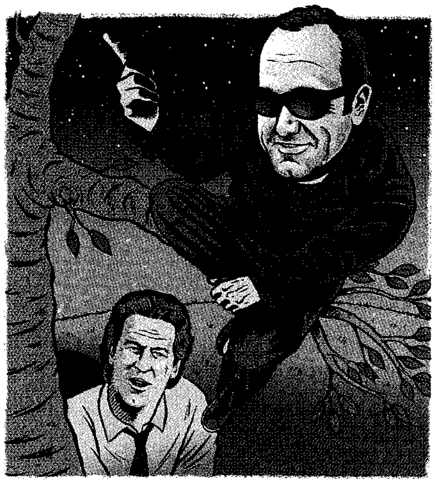
**IRON MONKEY**
This satisfying kung-fu flick from the action choreographer Yuen Woo Ping dates from 1993, before his work on "The Matrix," and the fights are less stylized, with more direct hand-to-hand combat and gymnastics. Dr. Yang (Yu Ruan-Guang), a mild-mannered herbalist, moonlights as the title character, a Robin Hood of rural China. It's amusing, during the slow humor scenes, to add up the various arts, besides martial, in which he excels. They include calligraphy, acupuncture, meditation, and cooking: when Dr. Yang slices noodles, he shoots them into a bowl from six feet away. In Mandarin.—*M.A.* (Astor Plaza, East 86th Street Cinema, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Sutton 1 and 2, and Village Theatre VII.)

**JOY RIDE**

For the first half hour, John Dahl's latest movie is true to the joviality of its title. By the end, nothing could be more ironic, unless you think it is joyful to be locked in a motel room with a shotgun tied to the door handle. Dahl, as he proved in "The Last Seduction" and "Red Rock West," has a gift for unearthing laughter in the dark, and the new picture marks a welcome return to form. Steve Zahn and Paul Walker play a couple of brothers, driving across country with only a CB radio for entertainment. A practical joke goes badly wrong, and they become the terrified quarry of a man—or a voice—called Rusty Nail. The film belongs to Steve Zahn: his helpless tendency both to taunt the world and to cringe with dread at the consequences has never been put so smartly to the test. With Leelee Sobieski as a semi-girlfriend.—*Anthony Lane* (10/8/01) (Chelsea Cinemas, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, Murray Hill Cinemas, 64th and 2nd, and Village East Cinemas.)

**THE LADY EVE**

A frivolous masterpiece. Like "Bringing Up Baby," "The Lady Eve" is a mixture of visual and verbal slapstick, and of high artifice and pratfalls. Barbara Stanwyck keeps sticking out a sensational leg, and Henry Fonda keeps tripping over it. She's a cardsharp, and he's a millionaire scientist who knows more about snakes than about women; neither performer has ever been funnier. This 1941 film, written and directed by Preston Sturges, is full of classic moments and classic lines; it represents the dizzy high point of Sturges's comedy writing.—*P.K.* (Cinema Classics; Oct. 24-25.)



*Opening October 26, Jeff Bridges and Kevin Spacey in "K-Pax."*

MARK ZINGARELLI

**THE LAST CASTLE**

Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (East 86th Street Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Metro Cinema 1 and 2, 19th Street East 6, 72nd Street East, and Village Theatre VII.)

**L.I.E.**

A delinquent kid (Paul Franklin Dano) first robs and then befriends a middle-aged ex-marine (Brian Cox), who knows a lucky chance when he sees one. As movie subjects go, pedophilia is volatile to the point of explosive, and Michael Cuesta has done well to hold his nerve and forge something so clever and careful. If anything, the cleverness cuts too deep. Cuesta's desire for tolerance is so pronounced, and Cox's skill is so generous and engaging, that, if you don't watch out, you can end up being seduced by the same strategic charm that ensnares the boy. The picture is suavely shot and never less than disturbing. Cuesta falters only when the comedy of sly, vicious seduction recedes to make way for a solid event—a guy keeling over with a heart attack, say, in the middle of a restaurant. But this is Cox's film, by a mile; as a good Shakespearean, he knows how to flood villainy with dramatic life.—*A.L.* (9/10/01) (Cinema Village and Empire 25.)

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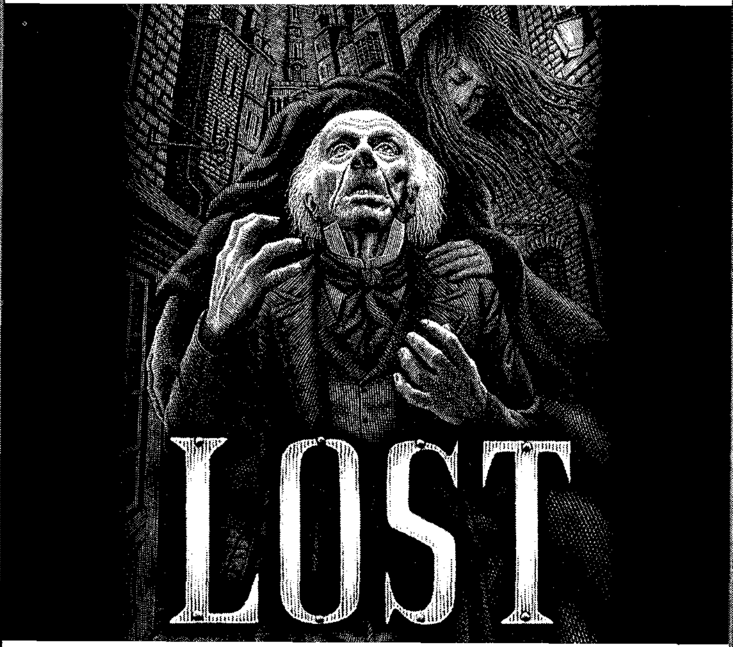

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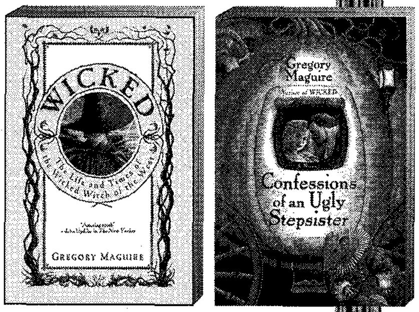
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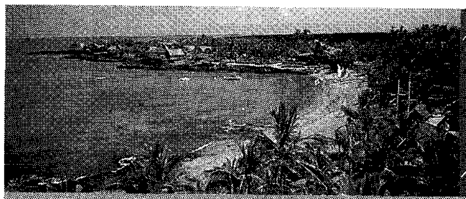

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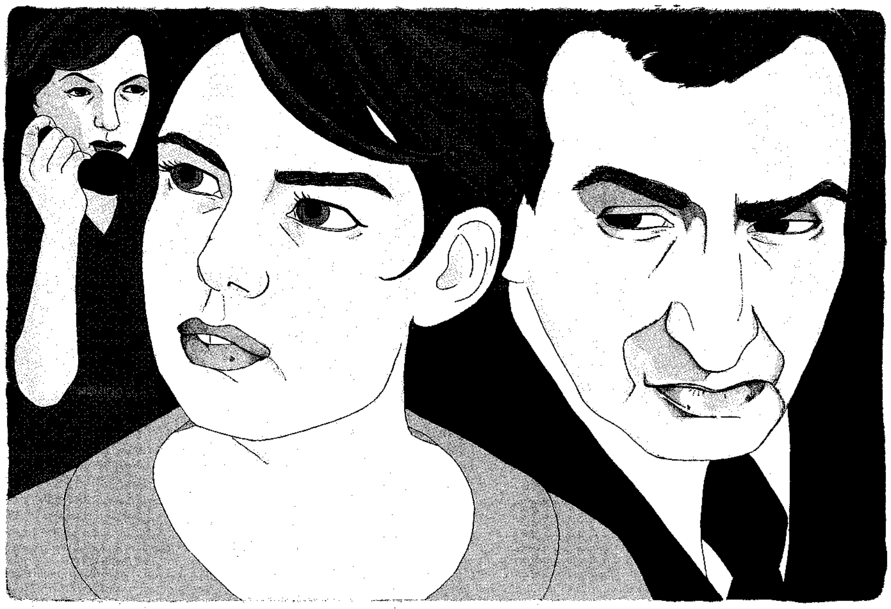
**MULHOLLAND DRIVE**
A woman wanders away from a car wreck and into a strange house. Little old people scurry under the foot of a door, squeaking like mice. Yes, it's a David Lynch project. This one began life as a TV pilot; you can just imagine the aghast faces of the network executives as they saw what they had commissioned. In the event, the elongated weirdness, stretching to two and a half hours, feels discomfortingly at home on the larger screen; if you ever wanted to see an epic horror-soap, this is what it would look like. Many established Lynch motifs are in place, most of them summoned from one corner or another of the nineteen-fifties: the innocent blonde (Naomi Watts), the baffled brunette (Laura Elena Harring), the clueless cop (Robert Forster). Addicts of the director will tie themselves in knots trying to pick the lock of the film; the rest of us can lie back and enjoy the spooking. With Justin Theroux and, as a tough old landlady, Ann Miller. Yes, *that* Ann Miller.—*A.L.* (10/8/01) (Angelika Film Center, BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, East 85th Street, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)



CINÉ-CLUB *Jacques Rivette made his first film, "Paris Belongs to Us," in 1960, around the same time as two other débuts: "The 400 Blows" and "Breathless." Rivette's film is the least seen of the three—all of which are screening at Walter Reade in a tribute to Cahiers du Cinéma—but his portrait of Left Bank paranoia remains thoroughly modern.*

**THE NIGHT OF THE HUNTER**
Despite its peculiar overtones of humor, this 1955 picture is one of the most frightening movies ever made. Robert Mitchum is the murderous, sex-obsessed, hymn-singing soul-saver with hypnotic powers, and his terrified new wife (Shelley Winters), who has a boy and a little girl from an earlier marriage, becomes his fervent disciple. The adaptation of Davis Grubb's novel was James Agee's last film work, and this shadowy horror fable was the first and only movie directed by Charles Laughton; it was a total financial disaster, and he never got a chance to direct again.—*P.K.* (Film Forum; Oct. 26-30.)

**SERENDIPITY**
Two consenting New York adults meet at Bloomingdale's during the Christmas season. He (John Cusack) takes Her (Kate Beckinsale) to Wollman Rink and proceeds to draw on her forearm with a pen, connecting her freckles to form the constellation Cassiopeia. She, wisely, proposes that they let fate decide whether or not they should be together. Cusack does his familiar woe-is-me loverboy shtick, and Beckinsale is full of charm and crispy vowels, but the real sparks are in the supporting performances, especially that of John Corbett as a musician boyfriend who's an unholy union of Kenny G and Yanni.—*M.A.* (Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema II, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, and Union Square.)

**SUMMER WITH MONIKA**
Harriet Andersson stars as a sensual wench who woos and marries a bourgeois youth named Harry (Lars Ekborg). Ingmar Bergman's sexy and sorrowful 1953 movie about a restless teen-ager's urge to escape her constricted life is also about the romantic disillusionment of her husband. Monika (who toils at a vegetable stall) sees Harry (who works at a glassware and china shop) as a relief from the usual brutes; her head stuffed with movie-bred fantasies, she hopes he'll rescue her from the cramped quarters she shares with a drunken father, a harried mother, and noisy siblings. For a summer, that's just what Harry does. He takes her island-hopping in the Stockholm archipelago, where the couple live like the Swedish Family Robinson. Then the fun runs out. In a prolonged closeup that Godard called "the saddest shot in the history of the cinema," Monika stares down the camera before bedding another man. In Swedish.—*M.S.* (Walter Reade Theatre; Oct. 27-28.)

**TOGETHER**
Lukas Moodysson's exemplary comedy, one part distressing to two parts delectable, is set in a hippie commune in the mid-nineteen-seventies—in Sweden, no less, where the hippie ethic was an article of faith. Moodysson is the perfect host, calmly introducing us, without the trace of a sneer, to a broad selection of trolls and fruitcakes. What follows is a dance of desire, as men, women, and even children pair off with one another; under it all, like a bass note, sounds the story of Elisabeth (Lisa Lindgren) and her drunken husband, Rolf (Michael Nyqvist), strangers to this utopian colony, who finally find refuge, and a kind of reconciliation, in its absurd dreams. That is Moodysson's great trick: to blow hot and cold, allowing us both to laugh at these bearded types and to respect, even envy, their frazzled companionship. In Swedish.—*A.L.* (8/20 & 27/01) (Village East Cinemas.)

**TRAINING DAY**
A synthetically plotted melodrama, but still it has power and depth. Denzel Washington is Alonzo Harris, a decorated Los Angeles narcotics cop who breaks in his new partner, Jake Hoyt (Ethan Hawke), a talented rookie from the Valley. Alonzo bullies and taunts the young man, teaching him the brutal wisdom of the street; Jake, who is highly moral, eager to impress, and ambitious, is hurt and baffled. It takes us a while to realize that what seem like random incidents on the street are really the outer edges of a malaise—the dishonesty of Alonzo and the other members of his undercover unit. Despite some trashy and conventionally violent scenes, the movie is psychologically interesting: the dominating and witty Alonzo wants the respect of the young man he's trying to corrupt. Washington is tormented and brilliant; it's his best performance so far.—*D.D.* (10/15/01) (Chelsea West, 84th Street Sixplex, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, and Union Square.)

**VA SAVOIR**
Jacques Rivette directed this slow-moving and complicated romantic comedy that works the permutations of love and deceit to a fare-thee-well. In Paris, a visiting Italian theatre troupe puts on a Pirandello play (which we see at exhausting length). The leading lady (Jeanne Balibar), who is French, loves the Italian star and manager of the troupe (Sergio Castellitto) but pines for an old boyfriend, the Parisian philosophy professor (Jacques Bonaffé) she left behind three years ago. The Italian, meanwhile, looks for a lost Goldoni manuscript and begins a flirtation with a ravishing young blonde (Hélène de Fougerolles). There's more, much more, and eventually everyone connects with everyone else. The movie is absorbing—Castellitto is particularly charming—but surprisingly unresonant in memory, perhaps because the passions seem entirely theoretical. In French.—*D.D.* (BAM Rose Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza, and Union Square.)

**WAKING LIFE**
A trip into uncharted territory from Richard Linklater, the director of "Dazed and Confused." More than ever, the title of that great movie sounds like a job description for all the Linklater characters still to come. The new picture is animated, although that word sounds too lively for the scores of people who amble through the frame, displaying just enough energy to talk. Maybe the director should have coined a new term for his technique—"shot in Slackerama" or something. The talkers are real people, filmed and then transmuted, on computer, into graphic form; you can, for instance, recognize Julie Delpy and Ethan Hawke—lovers in another Linklater project—still lying in bed, as if their love were still alight. There is plenty of smart, incidental trickery: one woman's hair turns into snakes, like Medusa's, and an angry guy in jail glows as red as hellfire. If there is a problem here, it lies with the aimless drift of the conversation and dialogue. Is the look of the film not hip and fantastical enough, without any help from the script? Could such colorful invention not have used, dare one say, a plot?—*A.L.* (Union Square.)

**ZOOLANDER**
Ben Stiller's comedy (he wrote, directed, and stars) is at best intermittently funny. He plays an empty-headed male model, and Owen Wilson is his stoned surf-boy rival. In their scenes together they generate a goofy comic energy, like the two most demented kids on the playground. Otherwise, the jokes are reheated (let this be the end of latte humor) and the scenes padded and overlong. The big joke—that fashion designers have formed a secret society to protect their sweatshop labor sources—seems severely misguided.—*M.A.* (42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, 19th Street East 6, Olympia I and II, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

## ALSO PLAYING

**THE DEEP END** (8/13/01)
59th Street East Cinema.

**THE ENDURANCE**
Angelika Film Center, Empire 25, and First & 62nd Cinemas.

**FOCUS**
Cinema 3rd Avenue and Union Square.

**GHOST WORLD** (8/6/01)
Angelika Film Center and State.

**HEARTS IN ATLANTIS**
Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, and Orpheum VII.

LARA TOMLIN

**THE OTHERS** (8/13/01)
84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, 19th Street East 6, and Village Theatre VII.

**RIDING IN CARS WITH BOYS**
Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, and Union Square.

**SOBIBOR, OCTOBER 14, 1943, 4 P.M.**
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.

## THEATRE ADDRESSES

*Unless noted, call 777-FILM for show times.*

**Angelika Film Center,** 18 W. Houston St.
**Astor Plaza,** 44th St. at Broadway.
**BAM Rose Cinemas,** 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn.
**Battery Park 16,** West St. at Vesey St. (945-3418).
**Beekman,** Second Ave. at 66th St.
**Chelsea Cinemas,** 260 W. 23rd St.
**Chelsea West,** 333 W. 23rd St.
**Cinema I,** Third Ave. at 60th St.
**Cinema II,** Third Ave. at 60th St.
**Cinema 3rd Avenue,** Third Ave. at 60th St.
**Cinema Village,** 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363).
**Coronet Cinemas,** Third Ave. at 59th St.
**East 85th Street,** First Ave. at 85th St.
**East 86th Street Cinemas,** Third Ave. at 86th St.
**84th Street Sixplex,** Broadway at 84th St.
**Empire 25,** on 42nd St. near Eighth Ave. (398-3939).
**59th Street East Cinema,** 239 E. 59th St.
**Film Forum,** W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
**First & 62nd Cinemas,** 400 E. 62nd St.
**42nd Street E Walk,** 42nd St. near Eighth Ave.
**Kips Bay Theatre,** Second Ave. at 32nd St.
**Lincoln Plaza Cinemas,** Broadway at 63rd St.
**Lincoln Square,** Broadway at 68th St.
**Metro Twin,** Broadway at 99th St.
**Murray Hill Cinemas,** 160 E. 34th St.
**New York Twin,** Second Ave. at 67th St.
**19th Street East 6,** Broadway at 19th St.
**Olympia I and II,** Broadway at 107th St.
**Orpheum VII,** Third Ave. at 86th St.
**Paris,** 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
**Park & 86th Street Cinemas,** 125 E. 86th St.
**Pioneer,** 155 E. 3rd St. (254-3300).
**Quad Cinema,** 34 W. 13th St.
**The Screening Room,** 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
**72nd Street East,** Third Ave. at 71st St.
**64th and 2nd,** Second Ave. at 64th St.
**62nd & Broadway,** 62 W. 62nd St.
**State,** Broadway at 45th St.
**Sutton 1 and 2,** Third Ave. at 57th St.
**Union Square,** Broadway at 13th St.
**Village East Cinemas,** Second Ave. at 12th St.
**Village Theatre VII,** Third Ave. at 11th St.
**Walter Reade Theatre,** Lincoln Center (875-5600).
**Waverly 1 and 2,** Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
**Ziegfeld,** 141 W. 54th St.

## REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

*Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.*

**AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE**
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Through Oct. 28: "Frankenstein Film Fiesta." Oct. 27 at 2: "Bride of Frankenstein" (†). ♦ Oct. 27 at 4:30: "The Revenge of Frankenstein" (1958, Terence Fisher). ♦ Oct. 28 at 2: "The Golem" (1920, Paul Wegener and Carl Boese). ♦ Oct. 28 at 4:30: "The Spirit of the Beehive" (1973, Victor Erice; in Spanish). ♦ Repertory nights. Oct. 27-28 at 6:30: "Psycho" (1960, Alfred Hitchcock).

**BAM ROSE CINEMAS**
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-777-3456)—Through Oct. 30: Australian films. Oct. 24 at 7:30: "The Kid Stakes" (1927, Tal Ordell). ♦ Oct. 25 at 7:15 and 9:30: "Floating Life" (1996, Clara Law). ♦ Oct. 26 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "The Quiet Room" (1996, Rolf de Heer). ♦ Oct. 27 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Romper Stomper" (1992, Geoffrey Wright). ♦ Oct. 28 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Chopper" (2000, Andrew Dominik). ♦ Oct. 29 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: A program of Australian animated shorts. ♦ Oct. 30 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert" (1994, Stephan Elliott).

**CINEMA CLASSICS**
332 E. 11th St. (677-5368)—Oct. 24-25 at 8 and 10: "The Lady Eve" (†). ♦ Oct. 26-29: "Andrei Rublev" (1966, Andrei Tarkovsky; in Russian). ♦ Oct. 30 at 8 and 10: "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari" (1919, Robert Wiene), accompanied by the music of Radiohead.

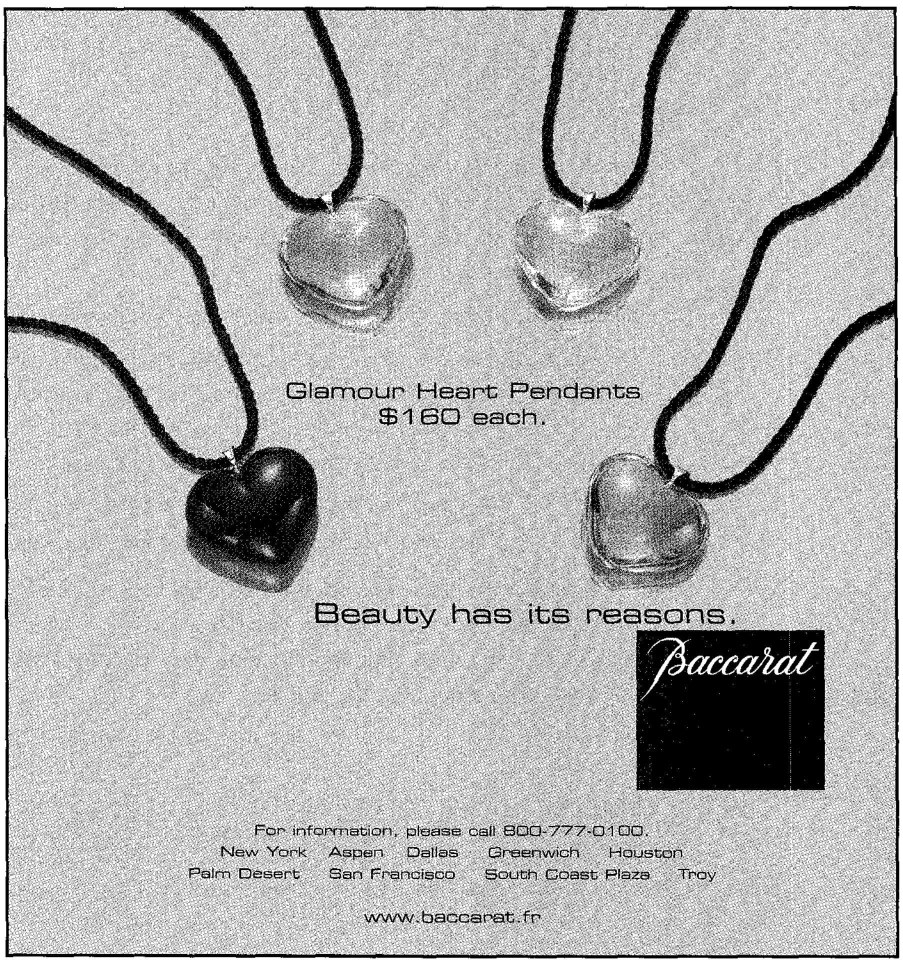
**FILM FORUM**
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—Oct. 24-25 at 1:20, 3:30, 5:40, 7:50, and 10: A new print of Terry Gilliam's "Jabberwocky" (1977). ♦ Oct. 26-30 at 1, 2:50, 4:40, 6:30, 8:20, and 10:10: "Night of the Hunter" (†).

**FLORENCE GOULD HALL**
55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Classic French films. Oct. 30 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "La Haine" (†).

**MUSEUM OF MODERN ART**
Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Through Oct. 28: A salute to Britain's FilmFour. Oct. 25 at 2: "Naked" (1993, Mike Leigh). ♦ Oct. 25 at 6: "Letter to Brezhnev" (1985, Chris Bernard). ♦ Oct. 26 at 2: "The Crying Game" (1992, Neil Jordan). ♦ Oct. 27 at 5:30: "Beautiful Thing" (1995, Hettie MacDonald). ♦ Oct. 28 at 3: "Bhaji on the Beach" (1993, Gurinder Chadha). ♦ Oct. 28 at 5: "Sexy Beast" (2000, Jonathan Glazer). ♦ Special event. Oct. 26 at 6:30: Disney animator John Canemaker introduces "Peter Pan" (1953, Hamilton Luske, Clyde Geronimi, and Wilfred Jackson). ♦ Oct. 27 and Oct. 29 at 2: A retrospective of the Gold Winners of the British Television Advertising Awards. ♦ Oct. 28 at 1: The best British ads of 2000. ♦ Oct. 29 at 6 and Oct. 30 at 4: "Hy Hirsh and the 1950s: Jazz and Abstraction in Beat-Era film," prints of Hirsh's work paired with films by his contemporaries.

**THE SCREENING ROOM**
54 Varick St. (334-2100)—Through Oct. 25: Movies from the Edinburgh Film Festival. Oct. 24 at 3: "Beautiful People" (1999, Jasmin Dizdar). ♦ Oct. 24 at 5: "My Son the Fanatic" (1999, Udayan Prasad). ♦ Oct. 24 at 7: "Love Is the Devil" (1998, John Maybury). ♦ Oct. 24 at 9: "Ratcatcher" (1999, Lynne Ramsay). ♦ Oct. 25 at 3: "The Full Monty" (1997, Peter Cattaneo). ♦ Oct. 25 at 5: "A Room for Romeo Brass" (1999, Shane Meadows). ♦ Oct. 25 at 7: "Under the Skin" (1997, Carine Adler). ♦ Oct. 25 at 9: "Nil by Mouth" (1997, Gary Oldman).

**WALTER READE THEATRE**
Lincoln Center (875-5600)—Through Nov. 15: A tribute to *Cahiers du Cinéma.* Oct. 24 at 1: "The Wrong Man" (1956, Alfred Hitchcock). ♦ Oct. 24 at 3:15, Oct. 25 at 5:15, and Oct. 26 at 9:15: "Artists and Models" (1956, Frank Tashlin). ♦ Oct. 25 at 1 and 7:30, Oct. 26 at 7, and Oct. 29 at 1: "The Crimson Curtain" (1952, Alexandre Astruc; in French) and "La Nouvelle Vague par Elle-Même" (1964, André Labarthe; in French). ♦ Oct. 25 at 3:15 and 9:30 and Oct. 27 at 5:40: "Tales of the Pale and Silvery Moon" (1953, Kenji Mizoguchi; in Japanese). ♦ Oct. 27 at 3:45: "Le Cinéma des Cahiers" (2001, Edgardo Cozarinsky; in French). ♦ Oct. 27 at 7:40 and Oct. 28 at 3:45: "Summer with Monika" (†). ♦ Oct. 27 at 9:40, Oct. 30 at 1, and Oct. 31 at 3:10: "Pickpocket" (1959, Robert Bresson; in French). ♦ Oct. 28 at 6: "Moi, un Noir" (1958, Jean Rouch; in French). ♦ Oct. 28 at 7:30 and Oct. 30 at 2:45: "Paris Belongs to Us" (1960, Jacques Rivette; in French). ♦ Oct. 29 at 3:10 and 7: "Breathless" (1960, Jean-Luc Godard; in French). ♦ Oct. 29 at 5 and 9: "The 400 Blows" (1959, François Truffaut; in French). ♦ Special event. Oct. 24 at 8: Quincy Troupe presents Miles Davis on film. ♦ Movies for kids. Oct. 27-28: "King Kong" (1933, Merian C. Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack).



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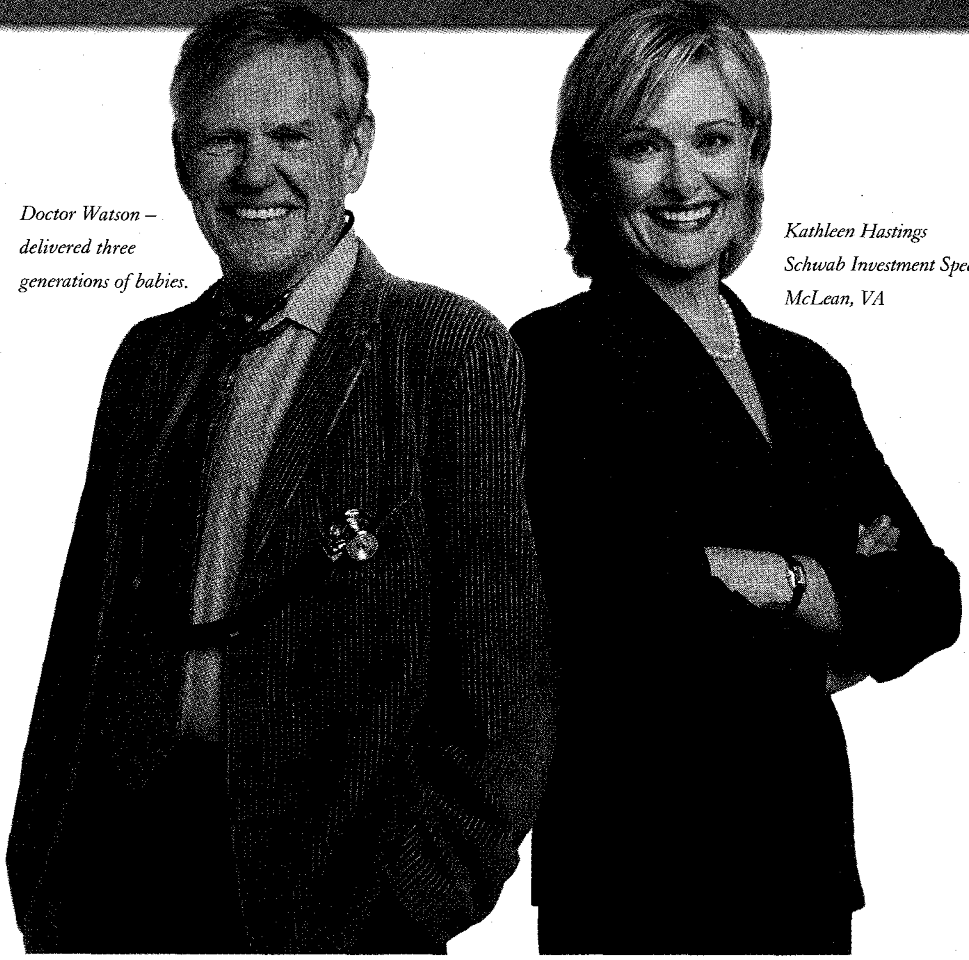

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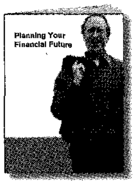

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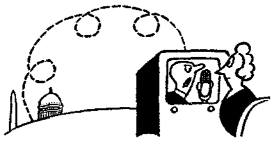
# THE NEW YORKER

# THE TALK OF THE TOWN

## COMMENT
### JITTERS



It's been a lousy week. By some creepy Parkinson's Law, anxiety expanded to fill the time available, especially the television time. Although not all the news was bad, even the best of it was not of a nature to bring happiness. The bombing campaign in Afghanistan seemed to be going well (if such awful work can be said to go well), and the coalition of governments assembled to prosecute the antiterrorist effort was apparently holding together, including its brittle Pakistani keystone. But the sequel in Afghanistan promised to be ugly; elsewhere in the Islamic world, anti-American resentment appeared to be growing; and the murder of an Israeli Cabinet minister by Palestinian extremists pushed hatred up a fearful notch. The background, of course, was the nagging dread of another large-scale terrorist outrage. There was plenty to be anxious about—even without anthrax.

As of Friday, these were the statistics: In New York, New Jersey, Washington, D.C., and Florida, some forty people had tested positive for exposure to anthrax, meaning that antibodies were detected in their blood. Of these people, eight had become infected; one died, and the seven others are expected to recover fully. The actual, palpable damage is small, but what did happen was quite enough to suggest what might. The immediate goal of terrorism is terror, and in this sense the anthrax scare has been a model of efficiency.

We're hardwired for high anxiety, thanks in some measure to our newest public utility, the 24/7 cable-news-television industry. The reach of the networks that make up that industry—CNN, Fox News, and MSNBC—exceeds their grasp. CNN's audience, the largest of the three, normally ranges between six hundred thousand and eight hundred thousand viewers; during the present crisis it has spiked to three million. By contrast, "Friends" draws thirty million. But the psychic impact of cable news is magnified by the fact that its audience includes, for much of the working day, a substantial proportion of the upper reaches of government and the media. When the élites get jumpy, nervousness trickles down.

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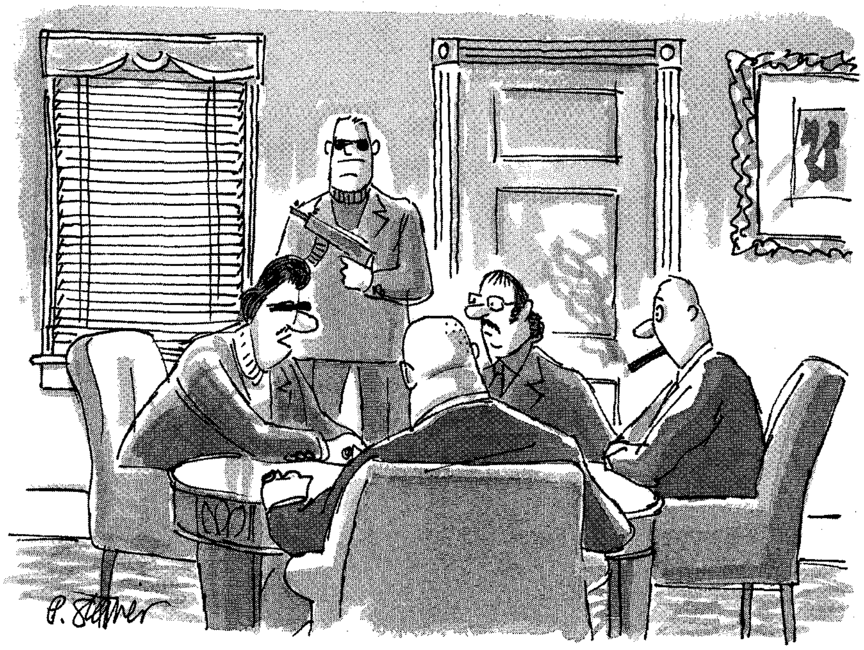
LAURENT CILLUFFO

This is not to say that the 24/7s have been doing a bad job; on the whole, they have behaved responsibly, and their retreat from Condity is no less welcome for having been involuntary. The problem they pose to what might be called home-front morale is a function of ubiquity, relentlessness, and, now, competition. For a decade, policymakers fretted that a "CNN factor" had made any military engagement that risked more than minimal American casualties unthinkable. The Somalia fiasco seemed to confirm that worry and, with it, the wisdom of the "Powell doctrine" of overwhelming force, sharply defined objectives, and "exit strategies." It is now assumed that September 11th raised the threshold of readiness for military sacrifice, and that the Powell doctrine's domestic political rationale, at least, has been mooted. That assumption remains to be tested. But now there are three news networks elbowing each other, with the broadcast giants following uneasily in their wake. Their newly refined audience-holding technique—a grim anchor delivering one piece of bad news at the top of the screen, an endless readout of more crawling across the bottom, and a screaming graphic ("AMERICA'S NEW WAR") in between—is a hologram of jangled distraction.

So everybody's got the jitters. This probably helps explain why Condoleezza Rice, the President's national-security ad-



*"From now on, we're not a family. We're a coalition."*

• •

viser, made a conference call the other day to the presidents of five major TV news organizations. After she hung up, the presidents stayed on the line and, the *Times* reported, agreed "to follow the suggestion of the White House and abridge any future videotaped statements of Osama bin Laden or his followers to remove language the government considers inflammatory."

According to the White House press secretary, Ari Fleischer, Rice's main argument was that the terrorists might be sending coded messages; according to the network executives, it was that the broadcasts are propaganda intended to incite hatred and violence. The first argument had a certain surface plausibility—bin Laden probably uses his satellite phone sparingly these days. But the fact that neither the Internet nor the satellite networks, including the Arabic news network Al-Jazeera, will be affected by the agreement renders it one cereal-box top short of a decoder ring. The second argument is less absurd but more irksome. No one doubts that bin Laden is a skilled propagandist. With his flowing robes and picturesque backdrops, his appeal is one that anyone who has seen "Lawrence of Arabia" can diagnose. But the notion that bin Laden's "ideas" can have the slightest effect on American resolve is an insult. Americans need protection from him, to be sure. But not this kind.

The day after Rice's conference call, Ari Fleischer placed a call of his own. Worried, no doubt, that the television people might think the White House was picking on them, he asked Howell Raines, the executive editor of the *Times*, to refrain from publishing transcripts of any statements issued by bin Laden or his gang. Fleischer explained his concern that bin Laden's message might get "into the hands of people who can read it and see something in it." Raines greeted this impertinence calmly. He pointed out that the *Times*' practice is to keep its readers fully informed, adding politely, "We are always available to listen to any information about security issues." Our leaders, perhaps, should take a cue from his sang-froid.

*—Hendrik Hertzberg*

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## REINCARNATION DEPT.
## BUDDHAS FOR BAMIYAN

Earlier this year, after the Taliban blasted into dust two giant statues of the Buddha that had stood for the better part of two thousand years in Bamiyan, Afghanistan, a Swiss filmmaker and entrepreneur named Bernard Weber met with Paul Bucherer, the director of the Afghanistan Institute and Museum. The museum, which is based in Bubendorf, Switzerland, houses cultural treasures salvaged from Afghanistan; Weber is the founder of New7Wonders.org, an Internet project that invites participants to cast votes to nominate the seven wonders of the contemporary world. Although the Bamiyan statues had not registered significantly in voting patterns—the Taj Mahal, the Great Wall of China, and Chichén Itzá were among the leading contenders, nominated by more than five million voters—Weber nonetheless asked Bucherer whether there was anything he could do to help restore the statues, or, at least, preserve their memory.

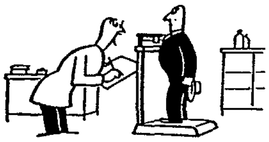
As it turns out, there was: Bucherer had in his possession a set of precise photogrammetric measurements of the statues, which had been taken in 1970 by a scientist named Robert Kostka. Using these, and other photographic evidence, Weber and Bucherer intend to create a three-dimensional image of the Buddhas, which will be made available on the Internet. Next, they hope to rebuild the statues at a tenth of their original size, and install them at the Afghan museum in Bubendorf. They expect to draw on the resources of a prominent Afghan construction engineer, who, along with several other members of the pre-Taliban ruling class, lives in Switzerland. Fund-raising for the project will be conducted through the New7Wonders database of voters, and the virtual statues are expected to be completed by early next year. Speaking last week by telephone from Switzerland, Weber said, "I am sending a million people E-mails."

Weber says he came up with the New7Wonders concept a couple of years ago, while searching for a suitable subject for an Imax film. He consulted with officials of UNESCO's World Heritage program and historians of art and architecture to create a list of seventeen of the greatest man-made structures; then he invited visitors to his Web site to make suggestions, as well as to vote for their top seven. (Once the voting has been completed, in 2003, Weber intends to produce or license New7Wonders merchandise, television programming, and books.) Among U.S. architectural achievements, the Empire State Building and the Statue of Liberty both made the shortlist. The World Trade Center did not, though Weber says that since September 11th he has received a number of messages urging him to include it.

Weber, who is forty-nine, says that his interest in the Buddha statues was prompted in part by memories of UNESCO's successful effort to save the Abu Simbel temples in Egypt, which were to have been flooded during the building of the Aswan Dam, in the nineteen-sixties. (To thank the United States for its role in the preservation project, Egypt made a gift of the Temple of Dendur to the Metropolitan Museum.) Weber and Bucherer's plan is that the third and final stage of the Buddha-statues project will be a full-scale reconstruction in Afghanistan. "Two months ago, people would ask me about this, and say I am being naïve to think this," Weber said. "Now, after all this tragedy, maybe in two or three years, the situation will be such that the people of Afghanistan will invite us to build these statues back." Weber added that the rebuilding would have not merely a symbolic value but a practical one. "In the Bamiyan Valley, the people had an infrastructure to live on, because the few tourists who went to Afghanistan went to see these statues," he said. "If we rebuild them, I think that, with all the media attention, we can create a very good incentive for people to go and visit what is actually a very beautiful country."

—*Rebecca Mead*

## CONTAGIONS
## THE SCOURGE YOU KNOW



If you are wondering what to worry about when it comes to biological weapons, you should concern yourself, first of all, with things that are easy to deliver. Biological agents are really dangerous only when they can reach lots of people, and very few bioweapons can easily do that. In 1990, members of Japan's Aum Shinrikyo cult drove around the Parliament buildings in Tokyo in an automobile rigged to disseminate botulinum toxin. It didn't work. The same group also tried, repeatedly, to release anthrax from a rooftop, and that didn't work, either. It's simply too complicated to make anthrax in the fine, "mist" form that is the most lethal. And the spores are destroyed so quickly by sunlight that any kind of mass administration of anthrax is extremely difficult.

A much scarier biological weapon would be something contagious: something a few infected people could spread, unwittingly, in ever widening and more terrifying circles. Even with a contagious agent, though, you don't really have to worry about pathogens that are what scientists call stable—that are easy to identify and that don't change from place to place or year to year—because those kinds of biological agents are easy to defend against. That's why you shouldn't worry quite so much about smallpox. Deadly as it is, smallpox is so well understood that the vaccine is readily made and extraordinarily effective, and works for decades. If we wanted to, we could all be inoculated against smallpox in a matter of years.

What you really should worry about, then, is something that is highly contagious and highly unstable, a biological agent that kills lots of people and isn't easy to treat, that mutates so rapidly that each new bout of terror requires a brand-new vaccine. What you should worry about, in other words, is the influenza virus.

If there is an irony to America's current frenzy over anthrax and biological warfare—the paralyzed mailrooms, the endless talk-show discussions, the hoarding of antibiotics, and the closed halls of Congress—it is that it has occurred right at the beginning of the flu season, the time each year when the democracies of the West are routinely visited by one of the most deadly of all biological agents. This year, around twenty thousand Americans will die of the flu, and if this is one of those years, like 1957 or 1968, when we experience an influenza pandemic, that number may hit fifty thousand. The victims will primarily be the very old and the very young, although there will be a significant number of otherwise healthy young adults among them, including many pregnant women. All will die horrible deaths, racked by raging fevers, infections, headaches, chills, and sweats. And the afflicted, as they suffer, will pass their illness on to others, creating a wave of sickness that will cost the country billions of dollars. Influenza "quietly kills tens of thousands of people every year," Edwin Kilbourne, a research professor at New York Medical College and one of the country's leading flu experts, says. "And those who don't die are incapacitated for weeks. It mounts a silent and pervasive assault."

That we have chosen to worry more about anthrax than about the flu is hardly surprising. The novel is always scarier than the familiar, and the flu virus, as far as we know, isn't being sent through the mail by terrorists. But it is a strange kind of public-health policy that concerns itself more with the provenance of illness than with its consequences; and the consequences of the flu, year in, year out, dwarf everything but the most alarmist bioterror scenarios. If even a fraction of the energy and effort now being marshalled against anthrax were directed instead at the flu, we could save thousands of lives. Kilbourne estimates that at least half the deaths each year from the flu are probably preventable: vaccination rates among those most at risk under the age of fifty are a shameful twenty-three per cent, and for asthmatic children, who are also at high risk, the vaccination rate is ten per cent. And vaccination has been shown to save money: the costs of hospitalization for those who get sick far exceed the costs of inoculating everyone else. Why, under the circumstances, this country hasn't mounted an aggressive flu-vaccination program is a question that Congress might want to consider, when it returns to its newly fumigated, anthrax-free chambers. Not all threats to health and happiness come from terror-

TOM BACHTELL

ists in faraway countries. Many are the result of what, through simple indifference, we do to ourselves.

—*Malcolm Gladwell*

## RETURN TO SENDER
## THE USUAL HATE MAIL

Rebecca Wortman, who manages a gynecology practice in Rochester, New York, where her husband, Dr. Morris Wortman, performs abortions, is more familiar with terrorist threats than most Americans. Last Monday morning, by the time Mrs. Wortman had opened a letter and found it to contain anti-abortion materials and a brownish powder, the office had already received three phone calls from a man threatening a suicide attack.

"At 8:05 A.M., a man called and said that if it was legal for Dr. Wortman to kill babies it should be legal for him to kill himself and anybody else, and that he wanted us to see it and hear it and be part of it," Mrs. Wortman said last week, speaking from the car in which she and her husband were driving to the Center for Menstrual Disorders and Reproductive Choice, which they founded fifteen years ago. It wasn't until the local police had arrived at their office, taken a report, and left that Mrs. Wortman turned to the mail—only to discover a reason to summon them again. "At this point, we are pretty much on a first-name basis with the F.B.I.," Dr. Wortman said.

Letters containing powdery substances and threatening death by anthrax first started arriving at abortion clinics three years ago, days after Dr. Barnett Slepian was shot dead through the kitchen window of his home in the suburbs of Buffalo. So when a flurry of anthrax-threat letters arrived at abortion clinics last week—there were reports of more than a hundred letters nationwide—workers in those offices were far better prepared to deal with them than your average news assistant or congressional aide. Last year, the National Abortion Federation provided its members with a leaflet advising how to look out for and respond to an anthrax threat. (Be on guard against mail with lumps and bumps; put anything suspicious in a plastic bag; there's no need to bleach your hands after touching a suspect letter.) So far, all of the abortion-clinic anthrax threats have turned out to be hoaxes.

The Wortmans received their first anthrax threat in 1999. At the time, they were more concerned about being attacked with firearms than about being attacked via the Postal Service. "With the random death threats, and everything all over the news, we let our guard down regarding the mail," Mrs. Wortman said. One morning, a co-worker opened an envelope containing a white powder. "She kind of threw the letter at me, and it got all over both of us," Mrs. Wortman said. They were quarantined in their office for more than three hours. "It was very unsettling," she said. "There was a note inside that said, 'Have a nice death.' " After that experience, Mrs. Wortman began opening all the office mail alone, with a plastic bag nearby.

Last Monday's letter initially seemed no more threatening than much of the Wortmans' other mail. "I thought somebody was sending us newspaper clippings, because my husband has been in the paper a lot recently," Mrs. Wortman said. "I opened it up, and it was filled with this brown sandy substance, and an article saying anthrax can kill you, and a quote from Jerry Falwell." Because the police have become, in the past two weeks, accustomed to fielding anthrax-anxiety phone calls, the local HAZMAT team's first reaction was to tell the Wortmans not to worry. When law-enforcement officers saw the letter, Mrs. Wortman says, they became much more alarmed, because its characteristics did not match those of letters sent to other abortion clinics. "Nobody wanted to take the letter with them," Mrs. Wortman said. "They all said, 'You take it.' 'No, you take it.' 'No, let's leave it for the F.B.I. guy.' So they left it in our building until the F.B.I. picked it up, that afternoon." Two days later, tests on the letter came back negative for anthrax.

Mrs. Wortman remains calm about the threat of bioterrorism, though she does have other concerns; in particular, she is unhappy that the police have yet to give her any information about the man responsible for the threatening phone calls on Monday morning, even though her office put a trace on the calls and identified the suspect. She said that terror, in the end, is something a person can get used to. "There was a time, three years ago, when I wouldn't let my husband sit in front of the windows," she said. "He would wear a bulletproof vest, and carry his gun. I would beg him to. But now—well, I think you get so immune. We try not to be complacent. But this office is both of our lives."

—*Rebecca Mead*

## EVERYBODY HATES OSAMA

NEW YORK—CBS Television President Leslie Moonves said Thursday that his network is considering a pilot for a comedy series whose plot arises out of the terrorist attacks. The proposed CBS comedy . . . was originally conceived before Sept. 11 as a middle-aged romance. Afterward, the writer suggested that they "heighten the stakes," Moonves said, and have it revolve around a widow and widower brought together after losing spouses in the World Trade Center bombing.

—*The Los Angeles Times.*

SCENE: *A supermarket. Jack loses control of his shopping cart, which slams into Kimberly's cart.*

KIMBERLY: Hey! You almost bruised my melons!

(*Laugh track*)

JACK: Sorry. I'm not used to shopping. I thought it was a speed event.

(*Laugh track*)

KIMBERLY: What's an incompetent guy like you doing in a place like this?

(*Laugh track*)

JACK: Well, you see, I used to be happily married, but . . .

KIMBERLY: But then you asked your wife?

(*Laugh track*)

JACK: No—my wife was in the . . .

KIMBERLY: Oh, God, I'm sorry. My husband . . . I guess I use laughter as a defense against my bottomless pit of sorrow and anger.

(*Laugh track*)

JACK: Want to put our groceries back on the shelf and go get dinner somewhere?

KIMBERLY: Sure. But I'm driving.

(*Laugh track*)

—*Ben Greenman*

## THE FINANCIAL PAGE

# NEW TRUCK CITY

Every weekday, dozens of trucks from Tuscan Dairy, one of New York's biggest distributors of milk, drive into Manhattan from distribution centers in Union, New Jersey, and Jamaica, Queens. Before September 11th, a Tuscan driver could count on spending eight hours a day on the road. Now it's more like twelve. An ever-shifting obstacle course of security checks and traffic jams eats up the day and, with it, Tuscan's profits.

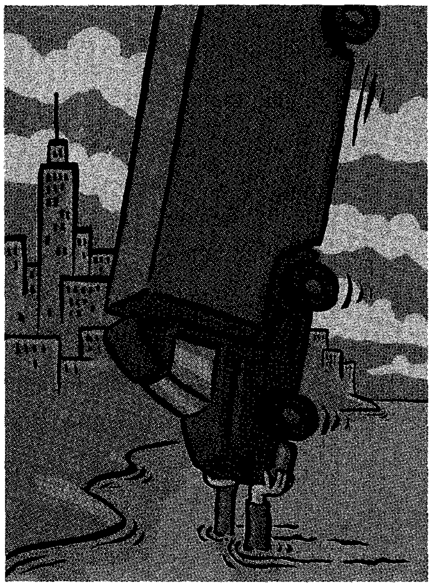
The lousy conditions have afflicted commerce all over the city. Store owners downtown are arranging dropoffs at stores uptown where they can pick up the day's shipments. Cement mixers bound for Manhattan construction sites from plants in Brooklyn and the Bronx can't make it in time—the stuff has to be delivered within ninety minutes of being mixed—and are routinely turned away. Drivers for Consolidated Freightways in Brooklyn, who used to drive in and out of Manhattan all day, now load up once and make as many deliveries as possible on one long trip, never sure how long it will be before they get back to Brooklyn for a second load.

The measures implemented in recent weeks to prevent another terrorist attack may well be necessary, but they have rendered a difficult task—getting goods across the rivers and into Manhattan cheaply and efficiently—almost impossible. The new infrastructure of prevention has illuminated one of the city's most vexing economic contradictions: New York, which is singularly dependent on trucks, is also singularly hostile to them.

There's no disputing that without trucks the city would starve. New York exports financial advice, media products, and fashion sense, and imports just about everything else. Truffles, guitar strings, duct tape, Red Stripe, Cipro: it all arrives by truck. Only three per cent of the freight that comes into New York moves by rail. The percentage of goods moved by trucks here is twice as high as it is in the rest of the nation.

Yet trucks get no respect. Robert Moses wanted New York to be a car-centered city, and he designed its highway system for commuters, not commerce. He built a network of parkways from which trucks were barred. Nearly a million cars enter Manhattan every weekday, impeding the flow of goods—but it's the trucks that get blamed. The local authorities aren't very accommodating, either. It is not unusual for an oversized truck to pick up a couple of thousand dollars in traffic tickets, or to pay twenty-five thousand for a tow. That's why at truck stops around the country there are driver-recruitment ads featuring a red slash through the letters "N.Y.C." A truck driver's ultimate perk is never having to get anywhere near the Cross-Bronx Expressway.

Even before September 11th, it was more expensive to ship goods into New York than into any other big American city—thirty per cent more for Federal Express, for example. Yet the trucks kept coming. New York has always been too lucrative to ignore. So much wealth and commercial activity is concentrated in so few square miles that businesses know they'll be able to reach hordes of customers with relative ease—after the trucks get here, of course.



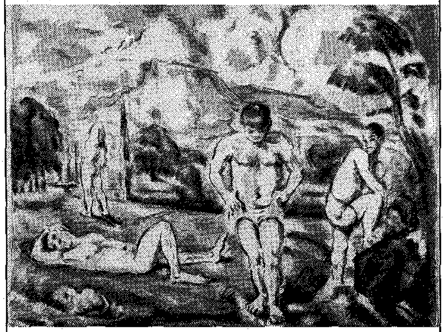
Now that the getting here has got even harder, many businesses shipping goods into the city are probably losing money. For Manhattan consumers, though, not much has changed. Shelves are full. Prices haven't risen. There are no reports of arugula shortages. Constrained by long-term contracts and, perhaps, by a reluctance to look like profiteers, companies haven't passed along their rising costs.

But how long can that last? Companies aren't charities. "If the congestion doesn't ease, if things don't change, companies will either raise prices or go out of business," Yosef Sheffi, the head of the Center for Transportation Studies at M.I.T., says. In the wake of the World Trade Center attack, New York has worried a lot about the fate of businesses in the city: will they stay, will they flee? But New York also has to worry about businesses outside the city. Will they stop delivering goods, or charge so much for them that those goods cease to be affordable? Cities thrive because the benefits of agglomeration outweigh the costs, for both companies and consumers. What has happened since September 11th has imposed an additional cost on living and doing business in New York. And additional costs, even if they're borne only in the short term, can change a city's economy for good.

Ever since the Second World War, New York has got away with making life miserable for trucks while relying on them for just about everything. In 1993, the city's Department of Transportation observed, in a little-read study, "Most New Yorkers seem to assume that the city's highways belong primarily to non-commercial vehicles and that commercial vehicles should be allowed to use them only if they don't get in the way." If the city is to keep thriving, that assumption will have to be scrapped. As the D.O.T. study concluded, "We may have reached the point where we no longer have the luxury of assuming that highways are mainly for private automobiles." If we hadn't reached that point in 1993, we have definitely reached it now. The D.O.T. acknowledged as much last month when it put a temporary ban on single-occupancy vehicles during the morning rush. But bigger changes may be in order: setting aside lanes, or even entire highways, for commercial traffic; making the ban on one-person cars permanent; reconstructing the parkways so that trucks can use them. For years, such notions have amounted to little more than a pipe dream for transportation geeks. Suddenly, though, their logic seems inescapable. Robert Moses's New York may be among the casualties of September 11th.

—*James Surowiecki*

SWANN
AUCTIONS



Cézanne, **Les Baigneurs** (grande planche), color lithograph, third state, circa 1897.

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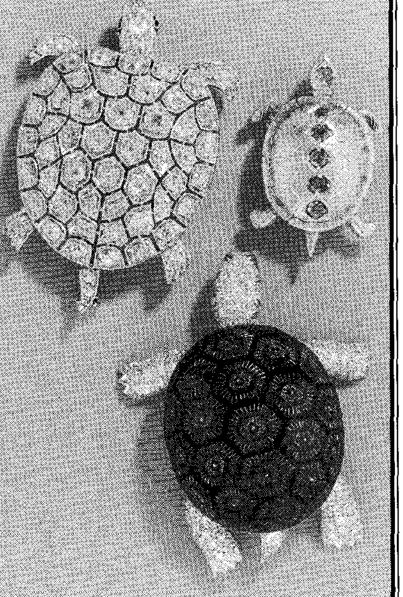

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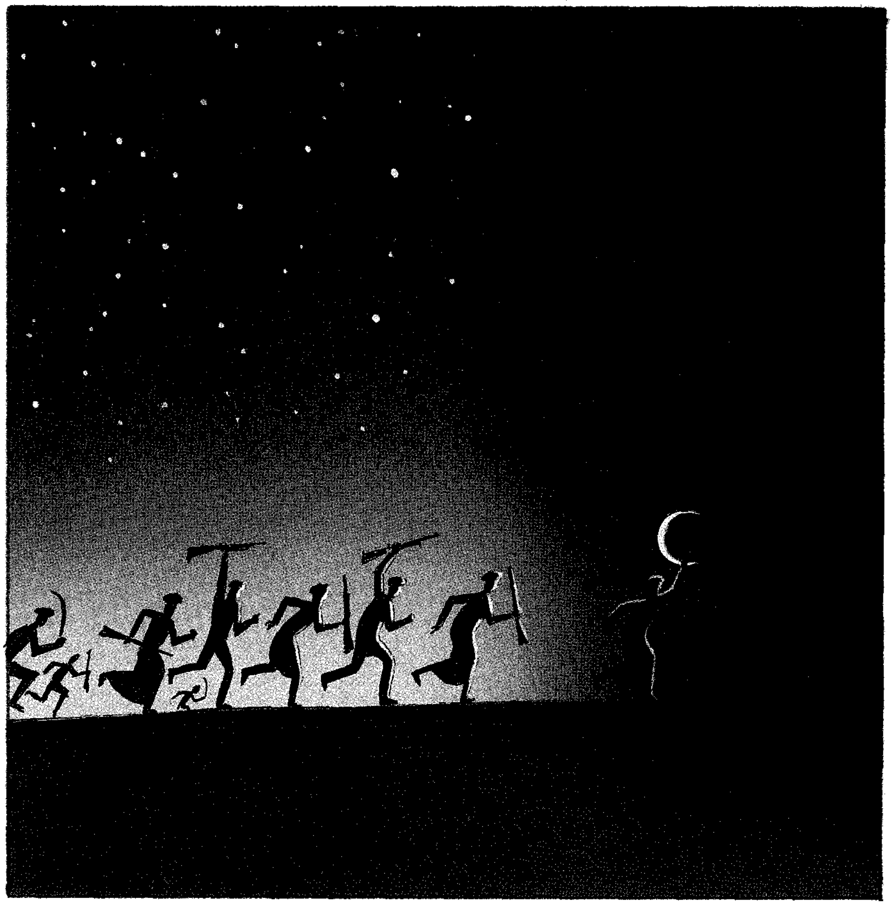
## LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

# WHAT TERRORISTS WANT

*Is there a better way to defeat Al Qaeda?*

### BY NICHOLAS LEMANN



*Osama bin Laden's real goal may be to start a civil war—or a series of civil wars.*

GUY BILLOUT

These days, life's small satisfactions seem to mean more than they used to, so I got quite a lot of pleasure from discovering that the Washington office of the RAND Corporation looks just how you'd want it to look—which is to say, very "Mission: Impossible." It's next door to the Pentagon, but in one of those office-and-mall complexes that evoke Orange County, California, more than Arlington, Virginia. I ducked through a set of glass doors between Au Bon Pain and Häagen-Dazs, and proceeded through a series of security checkpoints to the office, which was spotlessly sleek and new, with no stray pieces of paper anywhere.

The director of the Washington office, Bruce Hoffman, who is one of the leading experts on terrorism, had kindly agreed to meet with me, even though RAND had declared a moratorium on discussing the specifics of the war on terrorism, in part because it was consulting with unspecified government agencies about how the United States should respond to the attacks of September 11th. In Washington, the more you know about what's going on the less you're able to talk about it. So Hoffman and I had a curious conversation. He is a small, dark, friendly, wiry, bearded man with a lot of nervous energy. I would ask a question; he would smile and tilt back in his chair and look upward, as if searching the ceiling for small imperfections, and say, "Let me see if I can answer that by rephrasing something I said in my book"—"Inside Terrorism" (1998)—"or my testimony" (he testified before a House subcommittee in late September). And if that didn't work he'd give me an amiable, apologetic shrug and say, "Sorry, that gets to the line of what I can talk about," or, "I can't go down this road."

The world of terrorism experts is small and has heretofore been somewhat obscure. Hoffman told me that when he was in graduate school in international relations, in the mid-seventies, the standard choice of a field for an ambitious young person was nuclear strategy, or Soviet-American relations, and it's the people who made that choice (rather than choosing terrorist studies) who now, in middle age, sit atop the foreign-policy establishment. They have spent their lives looking down on terrorism experts. "They're sort of mechanics, like theatre ushers or guards at the mall," one former diplomat told me. But now it seems as though Hoffman and company made the right choice.

During the nineteen-nineties, when nobody was paying much attention, the terrorist-studies field was caught up in a fight, which intensified in 1995 after members of the Aum Shinrikyo sect released nerve gas in a Tokyo subway. In one camp were academics, who stuck to the traditional view of terrorists as political actors who use violence to achieve what they can't achieve through traditional means, and who therefore aren't likely to engage in mass, and apparently senseless, killing. "Terrorism has a purpose," Hoffman told me. "Writing it off as mindless and irrational is not useful." In the other camp were former and current government officials, who believed that terrorists were going to begin using weapons of mass destruction, out of sheer rage. The positions of the two camps are neatly conveyed by the two most resonant maxims ever coined by terrorism experts. On the academic side, Brian Michael Jenkins, a RAND colleague of Hoffman's, wrote in the seventies, "Terrorists want a lot of people watching and a lot of people listening and not a lot of people dead." On the government-official side, James Woolsey, the former head of the C.I.A., argued, "Terrorists don't want a seat at the table, they want to destroy the table and everyone sitting at it."

At conferences, the academics would accuse the officials of scaremongering to justify the establishment of a new government bureaucracy, and the officials would say that the academics were blind to the magnitude of the threat. "Most terrorists possess political objectives," Ehud Sprinzak, dean of the Lauder School of Government at Hebrew University and a member of the academic camp, wrote last year. "Any terrorist who threatens to kill thousands of civilians must know that his chances of political and physical survival are exceedingly slim. The usual suspects, such as Hezbollah, Hamas, and Islamic Jihad, groups that so many Americans love to revile—and fear—do not make the list of potential superterrorists. These organizations and their state sponsors may loathe the 'Great Satan,' but they want to survive and prosper politically." That this view turned out to be wrong doesn't mean that the other view was right. It was almost wholly focussed on the danger of chemical, biological, and nuclear attacks, undertaken for no purpose except destruction; it never envisaged the nature of the September 11th attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

Bruce Hoffman, to his credit, had begun warning in recent years that a new breed of religious terrorism was emerging that did not appear to play the old low-casualty game. In "Inside Terrorism," he wrote, "For the religious terrorist, violence is first and foremost a sacramental act or divine duty executed in direct response to some theological demand or imperative. Terrorism thus assumes a transcendental dimension, and its perpetrators are consequently unconstrained by the political, moral, or practical constraints that may affect other terrorists." Hoffman's crystal ball wasn't flawless. In a book of advice to the incoming Administration that RAND published earlier this year, he wrote, "It is patently clear that the U.S. intelligence community has scored a string of impressive successes over the past couple of years that proves the value and importance of this singularly vital asset in the struggle against terrorism. Proof of this may be found in the fact that Osama bin Laden and his minions have been consistently stymied for the past 26 months."

We now know what Osama bin Laden is capable of, but the arguments about what terrorists want—which underlie arguments about how to fight them—have not been settled. In "The Wealth of Nations," Adam Smith wrote, "In ancient times the opulent and civilized found it difficult to defend themselves against the poor and barbarous nations. In modern times the poor and barbarous find it difficult to defend themselves against the opulent and civilized." That pretty well expresses the standard academic view of terrorism as a loser's game whose danger to the rest of us is mainly psychological. Hoffman reminded me that, during the entire twentieth century, only a dozen terrorist incidents left more than a hundred people dead, and that during the thirty years preceding September 11th fewer than a thousand Americans had been killed worldwide by terrorists.

Obviously, bin Laden doesn't play by the rules of terrorism as the experts have understood them. But does that mean he has no rules—that he wants only to wreak havoc on a country he can't possibly conquer, because his motivation is psychological rather than strategic? Hoffman's view is that all terrorists have goals, and that it is dangerous to see them only as madmen bent on destruction. In other words, one should not only recognize their capacity for mass murder but also make a serious effort to understand how they think in order to anticipate their next move; we need a new theory of what terrorists want.

One could say that bin Laden's goal is a version of the one he often states publicly: to get the United States to disengage completely from the Middle East, by inducing fear in the general public which turns into pressure on the government. He could, however, have another goal, one that hasn't been worked into the copious public discussion of him: he could be understood as someone who is trying to start a civil war, or a series of civil wars, in the Middle East.

I am extrapolating this view of bin Laden as a sort of terrorist entrepreneur from the work of a group of political scientists who have been studying civil wars all over the world. Because their subject is not, officially, terrorism (though the insurgent side in most civil wars uses terrorism as a prime technique), they haven't been consulted by the government or appeared on television. But their work points the way to a fresh and useful idea about what bin Laden might be up to.

In this view, bin Laden wants, in the short run, to help his radical Islamist allies start insurgencies, and in the long run he wants these insurgencies to get control of the national governments of as many Muslim countries as possible. He may have already achieved control of one nation, Afghanistan; the picture of the Taliban as a separate entity that merely "harbors" him has begun to seem quite inaccurate. Bin Laden has been providing the Taliban with an important military unit, Brigade 055; John Parachini, a terrorism expert at the Monterey Institute, suggested last year that "bin Laden and his organization may function like a silent and independent partner in government" with the Taliban. The prospect of bin Laden's gaining effective control of more national governments is an alarming one, because governments (unlike terrorist cells) can collect taxes and raise armies and—in the case of Pakistan, a prime location for a civil war—possess nuclear weapons. The hesitance of most Arab governments to join wholeheartedly in the American effort to bring down bin Laden, even though he is their sworn enemy, can be taken as evidence that they see a link between the way they treat him and the possibility of insurgency in their countries.

Two of the leading theorists of civil war are James Fearon and David Laitin, both of whom are in the political-science department at Stanford. They argue that civil wars ought to be a subject of special concern because there are so many of them (in 1999, an international organization counted twenty-five ongoing civil wars), and because, compared with the conventional wars of the past half century, they are more violent, generate more civilian casualties, and last much longer.

*"As your attorney, I must strongly advise you against bringing the high heat."*

Fearon and Laitin believe that civil wars get under way because of specific dynamics that don't have much to do with over-all political conditions, ideology, or religious and ethnic disputes. (They do, however, believe that a high level of poverty almost certainly plays a role.) Laitin told me his evidence shows that grievance—for instance, oppression on the basis of ethnicity, religion, language, or political belief—does not necessarily lead to open rebellion against the government, as you'd expect. And when there is a rebellion there is no assurance that solving its stated grievance will cause it to stop. (Two other ambitious international research projects on civil war—one conducted by a team at the World Bank, the other by a C.I.A.-funded State Failure Project at the University of Maryland—have reached similar conclusions.) Fearon and Laitin's explanations of the escalations of civil wars rely on fine-grained examinations of the ways people interact on the ground. "We prefer micro-mechanisms to master narratives," Laitin says.

The mechanism of violent insurgency runs like this: The world is full of terrorist entrepreneurs; Osama bin Laden is merely among the most ambitious. To accomplish their aims, they first have to recruit foot soldiers, who are almost always young men. One recruiting tactic is to stage spectacular acts of aggression that make the insurgency appear to be powerful and exciting. What the entrepreneur wants to have happen next is a big, indiscriminate counterattack, which, in effect, means that his enemy has been put to work as his chief recruiter. This initiates what ETA, the Basque separatist organization in Spain, calls the action-reprisal-action cycle, and the insurgency takes off.

A good example of this dynamic comes from ETA's own history. In 1973, ETA assassinated Luís Carrero Blanco, the Spanish premier. Generalissimo Francisco Franco sent in troops hell-bent on punishment, and in so doing he set off a lengthy and violent regional civil war. Much the same thing happened in Sri Lanka, where the Tamil Tigers were small-scale terrorists until 1983, when they killed thirteen government soldiers. This set off a series of anti-Tamil pogroms—which in turn had the effect of starting a true civil war, one that is still going on. Bin Laden has added a new wrinkle: take action against, and draw reprisal from, an especially powerful third party; namely, the United States. So far, the Administration has clearly been careful not to take bin Laden's bait—which would mean retaliating in ways that leave lots of innocent people dead.

When I spoke with James Fearon, he observed that this deadly recruitment process may actually create an opportunity for the United States. When recruits are flooding into an unorthodox underground army, there is great potential for developing agents—in this case, young Arab men—who might feed American intelligence information that could disable attacks in advance and make the whole terrorist operation vulnerable. The cell structure of Al Qaeda is meant to limit the potential damage of betrayal (because so few people know everything); but it would be difficult for the organization to grow rapidly and at the same time limit the internal flow of information. In general, a period is probably beginning in which two sides will be intensely competing for the loyalties of people in a series of Middle Eastern countries. Fearon and Laitin and their colleagues argue that in the real world people choose to join not one side of a great clash of civilizations but what looks like the winning team in their village. In Afghanistan, it seems to matter far more that the Taliban is mainly Pashtun and the Northern Alliance mainly Tajik and Uzbek than that the two groups have different religious beliefs or attitudes toward modernity.

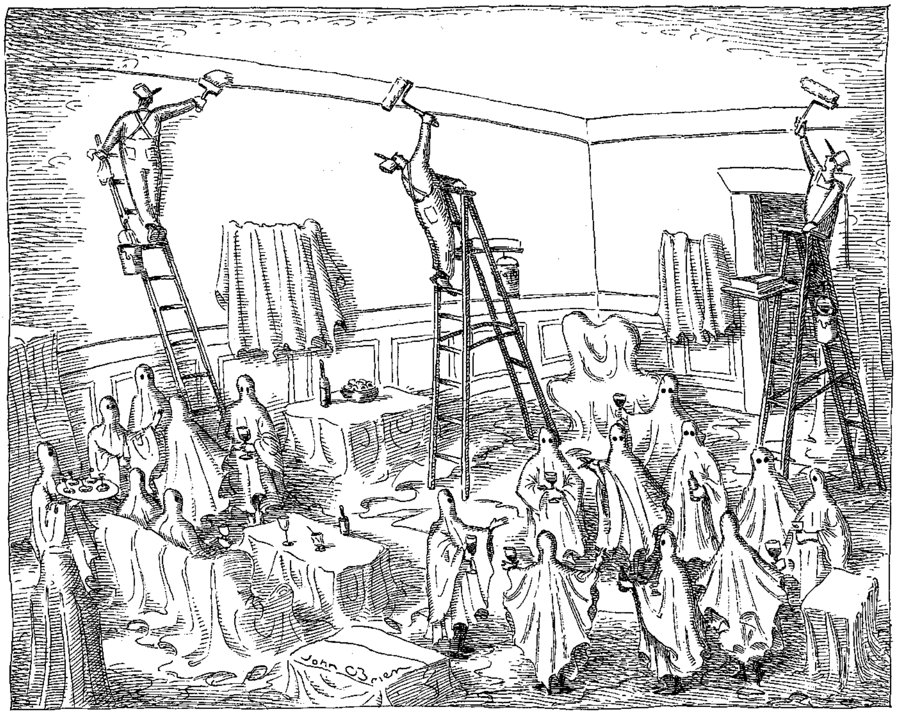
Stathis Kalyvas and Roger Petersen, both former students of Laitin's who now teach at the University of Chicago and at M.I.T., respectively, have conducted lengthy firsthand retrospective studies of civil wars, at practically a door-to-door level of detail. Kalyvas worked in Greece, Petersen in Lithuania. They found that people often choose sides on the basis of calculations about their personal chances of survival. These calculations go on at two levels: among young men deciding whether to join the insurgency, and among families deciding whether to place their allegiance with the insurgents or with the government. Insurgencies have to begin with what Petersen calls "zero-threshold actors"—that is, self-dramatizing people who are immune to the logical weighing of risk and reward. Mohamed Atta would seem to be a classic example. But an insurgency can't get off the ground with only zero-threshold actors; it needs to sign up people who assess risk more rationally. If one's aim is to limit an insurgency, Petersen told me, don't go to "the fanatics but the next group they'd go to for recruits, and give them incentives not to join. Change their thresholds."

People in the mold of the September 11th hijackers are a precious resource for an insurgency, because few people are naturally violent. "The reason there is so much violence in civil war is that people don't like to commit violence," Kalyvas told me. He believes that situations in which mass, indiscriminate killing appears to be taking place—like the long-running Islamist insurgency in Algeria—are actually situations where a few committed killers are doing almost all the dirty work. Once somebody becomes a killer, turning back is extremely difficult—this is known as "the tyranny of sunk costs"—and most civil-war violence takes the form of a small number of killers persuading members of the general populace to suggest who their next victims should be. As Kalyvas puts it, "You get a chance to get rid of people you don't like" without having personally to pull the trigger. Nobody informs on his neighbors in this way unless he believes he will be immune from retribution.

Those trying to stop insurgencies might try to identify and eliminate the few actual killers; it would be a mistake to assume that entire populations have become homicidal. The more useful anti-insurgency tactic is to compete, literally door to door, for people's loyalty (with the coinage of loyalty being willingness to inform on one side or the other). One reason that the entrepreneurs turn to terrorism is that, without the resources of a state, they have to make people believe that terrible things will happen to them if they don't side with the insurgency—that's why local killing can be an effective recruiting technique. One can surmise that many Pashtuns in Afghanistan might turn against the Taliban, which is much better positioned to distribute costs than benefits, if they could feel sure that neither the Taliban nor the Northern Alliance would kill them. The antiterrorist side, because it usually has more resources, has the advantage of being able to offer people rewards (like the American humanitarian-aid project in Afghanistan, if it works) as well as punishments.

Stathis Kalyvas points out that areas of "fragmented sovereignty" are the ideal places for the outbreak of violence. If the government has total control—or no control—then there's no use in waging a contest for people's loyalty. In one article, Kalyvas reminds us that the worst killing of civilians by other civilians in the American Civil War occurred in Missouri and Kansas, the places that were not firmly on either side. It seems quite clear that Afghanistan today—where, after all, there was a preëxisting civil war between the Taliban and the Northern Alliance—is such a place. Pakistan, whose instability was obvious before September 11th and has undoubtedly increased since then, would seem to be a likely site for a similar competition.

Social scientists who try to understand people as rational actors constantly calculating and recalculating cost-benefit ratios can come across as bleak and dour in their view of the world. But the work of the students of civil war actually could give rise to optimism about the situation in the Middle East, because it offers an alternative to the idea that the region and its religion are inalterably at odds with the rest of the world. The civil-war schol-



ars reject the idea of a unitary Islam, and also that of a struggle between a good, peaceful Islam and a bad, distorted, violent Islam. Instead, they see all religious beliefs as evolving, with the sacred texts being constantly reinterpreted as conditions change. Kalyvas reminded me, for example, that Europe's Christian Democratic Parties were almost all theocratic and anti-democratic when they were founded, in the nineteenth century, and embraced democracy only because they realized that otherwise they would lose their influence.

Applying these ideas to the current situation would mean obtaining as much specific local information as possible, and then, perhaps through the use of native "subcontractors," convincing people that linking their future to bin Laden is a bad idea. It would have to be a slow, careful, patient process that combined punishment of specific violent people with the offer of rewards for potential allies of the West. None of this would alter the strategy of attempting to disrupt bin Laden's access to money and electronic communications and forestall further attacks. But, for the present, quiet is America's friend; killing, of Americans by bin Laden and of Arab civilians by Americans, is bin Laden's friend, because it draws ordinary people as well as combat troops to his side.

This might be called the retail approach to fighting terrorism: it is conducted on an almost individual level. But as American life gets more disrupted you increasingly hear calls for a more wholesale approach: the attempt to disable the entire Middle Eastern terrorist apparatus with a series of swift, broad military strokes. Although this side lost the first round of policy debates inside the Administration, its partisans certainly haven't given up.

Their position gets articulated mainly in the truncated form of allusions to the positions of hawkish policymakers—chiefly Paul Wolfowitz, the Deputy Secretary of Defense—who can't state their case publicly. In order to hear it in full, I went out one morning to a Washington suburb for coffee and bagels with Kenneth Adelman, who was the head of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency in the Reagan Administration. Adelman is no longer in government, but he is still very much a member of a cohesive circle of foreign-policy conservatives that formed in the late sixties and early seventies and is still going strong. He is on the Defense Policy Board, a group of former officials with a generally hawkish cast (it is chaired by Richard Perle, a leading defense conservative). This group has had two days of Pentagon briefings since September 11th, including a long session with the Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, and Wolfowitz. Adelman and his wife, Carol, have also seen the Cheneys and the Rumsfelds socially since September 11th. So although Adelman was speaking for himself, his views were formed in an atmosphere of regular contact with the Administration.

Adelman told me that rather than talk in terms of hawks and doves he preferred to discuss "narrow" and "wide" options. "The narrow end would be, focus on nine-eleven"—the September 11th attacks. "A manhunt for Osama bin Laden and his organization, and, at the outside, the Taliban," he said. "The wide group would say, 'Don't do that. Instead, go after weapons of mass destruction, networks, and countries that house them.' That's more doable than the first option. The chance of finding the man and his top lieutenants is infinitesimal. The argument against the narrow approach is that you'd be bound to be disappointed, and you won't teach the right lesson. The lesson would be, you almost have to knock down the World Trade Center and the Pentagon to get us to go after you."

The Taliban, Adelman predicted, will fall "in a few weeks." What should happen next in Afghanistan? "Do you have to have a government that you put together?" he said. "Most places don't have a government. You don't need to have a government there. My model would be, kick out the existing government, that's fine, and then if the Northern Alliance starts fighting, I don't care. The difference is between a government that supports evil people and a government that's incompetent but isn't doing anything. That's most of the world."

That took care of Afghanistan. What else would Adelman do? "Maybe Sudan and the Bekaa Valley," he said, "but the big enchilada is Iraq. The argument against it would be clear. One, there is no evidence that Iraq was involved in nine-eleven. Two, the coalition won't support us. Three, it seems like Bush's father's legacy—it's not part of the drill, it's a big diversion.

"The other side is, one, if we're going after international terrorism and weapons of mass destruction and states that support both, Iraq comes up three cherries. Two, just because we have no intelligence linking Iraq to nine-eleven doesn't mean it didn't happen. Three, we know Saddam Hussein harbored the mastermind of the bombing of the World Trade Center in '93 and that he tried to assassinate George H. W. Bush in Kuwait the same year. He's much weaker today than he was in '91, when the Gulf War ended, and we learned then that his soldiers don't want to fight for him."

I asked Adelman what he would say to President Bush if he were given the opportunity to sell him personally on the wide option.

"This is a historic moment," he told me (as Bush). "You have a mission. It is almost a divine mission. You have one task in life. That is to wage a global campaign against terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. Unlike any of your predecessors, including Harry Truman at the beginning of the Cold War, you have no public opposition, no congressional opposition, and meaningless foreign opposition. It is a noble, wonderful mission. Our children's lives will be better for it. You are given the opportunity by tragedy to solve the larger problem. It is virtually impossible to wipe out terrorist groups, but, by God, you can wipe out countries that support terrorism. There are two countries that are not easy picking, but not tough—Afghanistan and Iraq. I have no evidence that Iraq was involved in nine-eleven, but I *feel* it. There is no reason you can't use these ideal conditions to help fulfill your mission."

Adelman had been looking at me intently as he spoke. Now he sank back into the sofa where he was sitting. I was no longer the President and we were no longer in the Oval Office. "That's the argument," he said. ♦

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*From the Ouray (Colo.) Plaindealer.*

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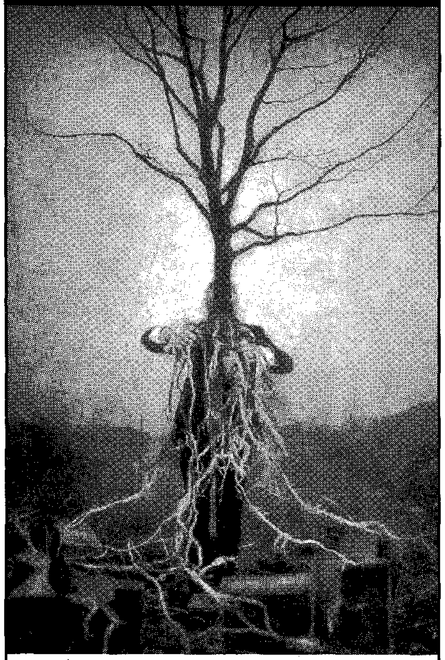

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# AN OUTTAKE FROM "ANTIQUES ROADSHOW"

BY CALVIN TRILLIN

Ross Linkard, Linkard & Sons Antiques, Alexandria, Virginia: And what can you tell us, sir, about this bowl you've brought in—ceramic, it appears, with a rustic scene on it that looks to me like . . . Is that a man standing in a hole?

Red-Faced Man: We've never really been able to determine whether he's in a hole or it's just a very short man. People were a lot smaller in those days, you know.

Linkard: And may I ask how you come to have this bowl?

Red-Faced Man: I bought it at a garage sale in New Jersey. From an old woman. Quite old. Blind, actually. Legally blind, that is. A lot of those legally blind people can see, you know. But I remember she never contradicted me when I kept saying how if we bought the bowl we'd probably have to spend a lot more money on it getting the stain out.

Linkard: I don't see any stain here.

Red-Faced Man: Well, that's just it. There wasn't any stain. I read in one of those books about how to bargain that you have to take advantage of your adversary's weakness, and I figured that her big weakness was that she couldn't see. So I think I really outsmarted her and picked me up a real bargain.

Linkard: You cheated a blind person to get this bowl?

Red-Faced Man: I wouldn't say "cheated." It's what you call a negotiating device. If some ignorant bozo came into your shop to sell you some old picture he'd found in the attic, and you recognized it as a Henry David Thoreau, would you tell him that? No, you'd take advantage of his weakness—ignorance, in this case—and you'd buy it for a pittance. Isn't that what this whole business is about—putting one over on people?

Linkard: Henry David Thoreau was not a painter.

Red-Faced Man: Just my point. That would make the picture all the rarer, wouldn't it?

Linkard: Well, I've gone over this bowl, and I should say first that this type of artifact is relatively common in the Middle Atlantic states.

Red-Faced Man: Is New Jersey a Middle Atlantic state?

Linkard: Yes, indeed, it is.

Red-Faced Man: Right! That checks out exactly! I think we're onto something.

Linkard: As I was saying, these artifacts are relatively common in the Middle Atlantic states. They tend to be wide, hemispherical vessels, used to hold food or fluids. We see them quite often in kitchens. This one has the classic bowl-like shape. Concave. And then, you see, if you turn it around it becomes convex. That's classic. You'll find that in all of them.

Red-Faced Man: This is all starting to fall into place. I've obviously got a real find here.

Linkard: Did the woman tell you anything about how the bowl happened to be in her possession?

Red-Faced Man: She said it had been in her husband's family for generations. Her husband had recently died and she felt she had to sell it, along with a lot of other items in the garage, to raise money for his headstone. But I wouldn't try going to the bank with that headstone story. You probably hear that a dozen times a day in your line of work, right? I mean, if every helpless-looking old blind woman who said she wanted to sell something to get money to pay for her husband's headstone really did, the countryside would be littered with headstones. We'd be tripping over headstones. The highways would be blocked.

Linkard: Did she have any idea how the bowl got into the family?

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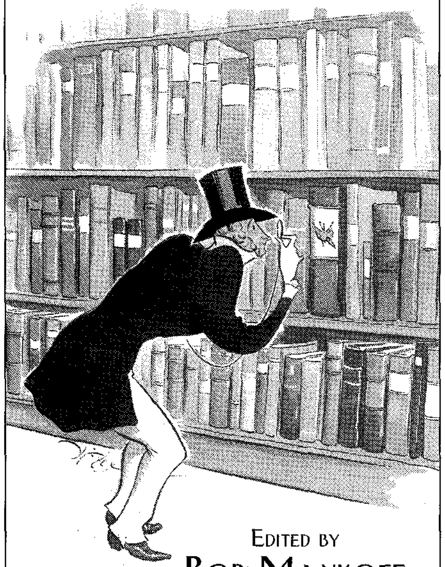

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RED-FACED MAN: Her husband had always been told that one of his ancestors got it as a wedding gift in the late eighteenth century from a wealthy flax broker. Since then, a cousin of mine has told me that in the late eighteenth century it was a custom to do pictures of men standing in holes, and that there was also a custom of doing pictures of short men. I understand that when they did both at the same time you sometimes couldn't see the man at all. So all that checks out.

LINKARD: Well, I don't doubt that it could be of Middle Atlantic origin, but I'd say it's a piece that's quite a bit more recent than the eighteenth century.

RED-FACED MAN: What makes you say that?

LINKARD: Well, for one thing, this inscription on the bottom here that says "microwave safe."

RED-FACED MAN: You don't think that could have been added later?

LINKARD: I think it's highly unlikely. May I ask you, sir, how much you paid for this bowl?

RED-FACED MAN: I paid a hundred dollars. Got her down from a hundred and fifty.

LINKARD: You paid a hundred dollars for a bowl you can get for two or three dollars at Wal-Mart? You've got to be kidding!

RED-FACED MAN: I don't see anything funny about this.

LINKARD: Oh, my, that's rich. Mercy me. A hundred dollars. Lance, Charlie—did you hear that? A hundred dollars. Oh, that's just too good.

RED-FACED MAN: Stop laughing!

LINKARD: Got her down from a hundred and fifty! Got the blind woman down from a hundred and fifty! I can't stand it. I'm going to split a gut. . . . Sir, I don't think you should hold the bowl above your head that way. . . . Argghhh!

[*Brrnng.* Cut to graphic.]

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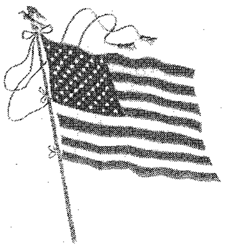
CONSTABULARY NOTES FROM ALL OVER
*From the Skagit Valley (Wash.) Herald.*

Someone stole money from the till of a pumpkin patch along Freeway Drive early Monday, Mount Vernon police say. The amount taken was unknown. No pumpkins were injured or stolen in the incident.



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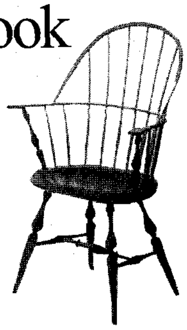

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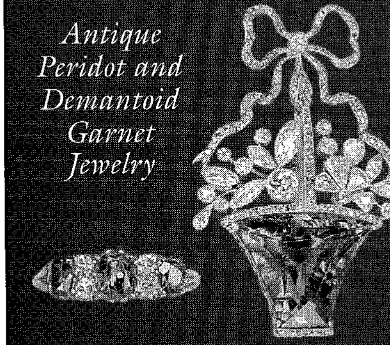

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### U.S. JOURNAL

# ARMY TOWN

*Practicalities, packed bags, and the threat of a larger loss.*

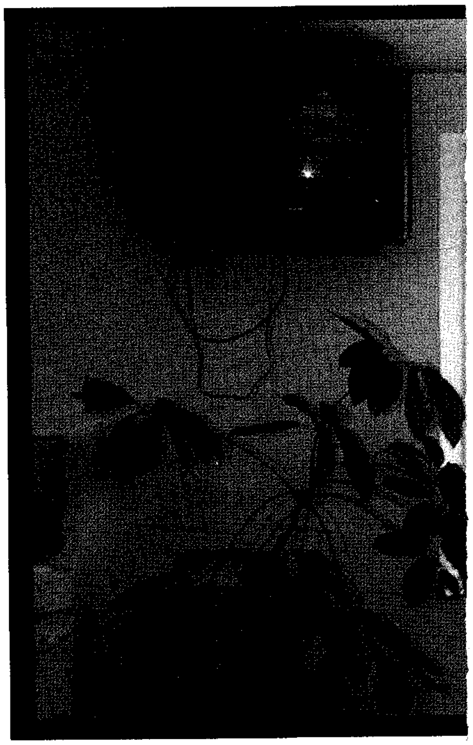
### BY MARK SINGER

FAYETTEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

Any soldier in the United States Army who happens to be a hockey or figure-skating enthusiast—or any hockey- or figure-skating-enthusiast family dependent of same—knows that there are only three satisfactory (i.e., indoor ice-rink-equipped) posting assignments: Fort Wainwright, Alaska; the U.S. Military Academy, at West Point, New York; and Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

This vital tidbit of information I picked up the other day from Colonel Bill Babylon, the effusively friendly officer in charge of M.W.R. (Morale, Welfare, and Recreation) at Fort Bragg, after he delivered a pep talk and handed out diplomas to a group of women who had just completed Army 101, an eight-hour course offered to spouses as part of the A.F.T.B. (Army Family Team Building) program. At the root of A.F.T.B. is the Army's institutional embrace, in recent years, of a we're-all-one-big-family-and-we're-all-in-this-together philosophy, a departure from its traditional if-the-Army-wanted-you-to-have-a-wife-it-would-have-issued-you-one credo. The A.F.T.B. curriculum begins with an introduction to hundreds of acronyms and abbreviations—M.W.R., CINC ("Commander in Chief"), KISS ("Keep it simple, stupid"), P.D.Q. ("pretty darn quick")—and progresses through customs and courtesies, military organization and the chain of command, and the nuts and bolts of how the Army assists its personnel in the logistical management of their domestic lives. The latter category includes a delineation of specific practicalities an Army wife should expect to confront in the event that, say, her husband arrives home one day with the news that in less than twenty-four hours he will be deployed for an indefinite duration to an overseas location that he's not at liberty to disclose but which his demeanor suggests either is or rhymes with Afghanistan.

The Army 101 class that I attended was a media opportunity of sorts, an abridged session witnessed by ten print and television journalists who had been delivered to a community center within the confines of what's formally known as the Fort Bragg Military Reservation. Several women, forewarned of our visit, had elected to skip class, so that when we arrived we outnumbered the students two to one. The instructor, a fourteen-year-veteran Army spouse, was addressing the topic "Supporting the Military Child's Education."



*Before September 11th, Fort Bragg was*

"Let's say you have a son or daughter in high school and you have to move, you have a P.C.S.," she said. P.C.S. means permanent change of station. "What are some of the bad things that can happen to your child?"

For a few moments, no one spoke. Then one woman said, "Curriculum changes. Credit-requirement changes."

"Yes, that's definitely something. What else?"

Another awkward pause, and then another volunteer, tentatively: "They lose their friends?"

"Oh, yes, absolutely. Anybody else? Come on, you guys."

It didn't make for great copy, but what was going on in that room nevertheless implied something vital. Whatever dimensions this war ultimately assumes, Fort Bragg, which has the largest population of any post in the U.S. Army, is bound to supply a high proportion of the soldiers.

PENTAGON
BARBER
SHOP
LOSED

*n post, which meant that the public was welcome in most areas; then it went on high alert. Photograph by Sylvia Plachy.*

Bragg is the command headquarters of the XVIII Airborne Corps and its fourteen-thousand-member 82nd Airborne Division, the fabled All-Americans—combat troops distinguished by their readiness to be deployed anywhere in the world within eighteen hours. It's also the headquarters of the U.S. Army Special Operations Command and the home base of the Third and Seventh Groups of the Army Special Forces (a.k.a. Green Berets). The super-élite counter-terrorist Delta Force commando unit—or, rather, the *putative* super-élite, etc., given that the existence of Delta Force is not officially acknowledged by the Army—also operates out of Fort Bragg. In recent weeks, the Department of Defense has authorized the mobilization of more than eleven thousand Army reserve troops, and at least sixteen hundred are now training at Fort Bragg.

In the pre-September 11th era, Fort Bragg, which covers two hundred and fifty square miles of central North Carolina lowlands and sits next door to the aesthetically challenged city of Fayetteville, was a so-called open post, which meant that, with the exception of certain off-limits areas, the public was welcome to drive through its residential subdivisions (Normandy Heights, Anzio Acres, Corregidor Courts), spend money in its stores and restaurants, and take advantage of its leisure-time amenities (two golf courses, two museums, movie theatres, riding stables, a skeet-shooting range, the skating rink). Unavoidably, the terror attacks changed that. Detours have closed several through streets, and coils of concertina wire now line the margins of the property. Nevertheless, the prevailing ambience is one of barely disrupted normalcy, a reflexive refusal to become infected with the free-floating fear loose in the world beyond.

At eleven o'clock on most weekday mornings since mid-September, Colonel Roger King, an affable Texan who is Fort Bragg's senior public-affairs officer, has met the press in a makeshift briefing room inside a golf-course clubhouse situated on a still accessible public road. During the first briefing after the bombing of Afghanistan got under way, he delivered this concise summary: "The United States did conduct attacks over the weekend on targets in Afghanistan. I have nothing further to add to that." When a TV reporter who presumably knew better asked, "Are there any new troop-deployment orders you could comment upon?" the reply was "Any announcement of deployment orders concerning forces of the United States will come from the Department of Defense."

Colonel King seemed thoroughly at ease with the ritual vacuity of the proceedings, the manner in which nothing was said and therefore quite a lot was expressed. It makes perfect tactical sense that the American people—and, by extension, America's enemies—are not entitled to know where troops have been or are about to be deployed. What actually brings reporters to Fort Bragg

*"Maybe it's part of the New Maturity, but you don't see grownups on those damn scooters anymore."*

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these days, however, is not so much curiosity about deployments per se as a preoccupation with a subtext of questions that have never been squarely put to an Army spokesman. The fundamental one is: Who will die next? We refuse to abandon our ingrained belief in reasonably happy endings and so count upon our well-trained and equipped designees to extinguish, deus ex machina, the menace of international terrorism. Inconveniently, these proxies happen to be our sons, but that doesn't stop us from preferring a protracted battle on foreign soil to any further loss of life on the home front. "This is my job" is the standard response when a soldier is asked whether September 11th has altered his world view or emotional temperature. "We've all been trained to do our jobs."

As Southern cities go, Fayetteville possesses a dim collective long-term memory and an equally dim aura of civic pride, a likely syndrome in a military town where transients outnumber deep-dyed natives. The largest private-sector employer, Kelly-Springfield Tire, operates a factory where three thousand six hundred people work, almost five hundred of whom, it was recently announced, will soon be laid off. Only two other manufacturers employ more than a thousand workers. Most significant, Fayetteville doesn't boast a single large-scale homegrown enterprise, blue or white collar. The classic chemistry of old money, new money, and densely textured local history which underlies the character of an Atlanta or a Savannah, a Raleigh or a Richmond has never really existed to shape Fayetteville's story. Instead, Fort Bragg has.

Camp Bragg, as it was known, opened as a field-artillery training site in 1918. It wasn't until the Second World War, however—six months after Pearl Harbor, Fort Bragg had a population of ninety-two thousand soldiers—that Fayetteville assumed its full identity as an Army boomtown. In 1998, the Fayetteville *Observer-Times* published an ambitious and thoughtful series of articles that closely examined Fayetteville and four comparable Southern cities that were the homes of large military installations. The candid, overarching theme of the series was this: Fayetteville had a negative self-image, and the rest of the world didn't think much of it, either. The nadir had actually occurred a generation earlier, during the Vietnam War. That was when Hay Street, the main downtown thoroughfare—a day-and-night zoo of topless bars, plain old rowdy bars, and other magnets for bad-boy behavior—acquired a nickname that the community as a whole has never quite shaken: Fayettenam.

Ten years ago, the Fayetteville Area Convention and Visitors Bureau staged a mock funeral, a symbolic burial of Fayettenam. By then, thanks to a demolition campaign that had begun in the early eighties, the tawdry scenery had largely disappeared from downtown. But so, too, had the restaurants and retail merchants—gone to the malls and strip shopping centers that line the avenues between the city's center and the Army post, ten miles away. That's where the naked ladies ("Fayetteville House of Dolls, Stand Strong and Together America") relocated as well, in the company of the inevitable sprawl of automobile dealerships, automobile upholsterers, furniture showrooms, stereo outlets, tattoo parlors, pornoramas, no-tell motels, military-patch sewing shops, carry-out you-name-its, taco joints, Korean restaurants, Thai restaurants, pawnbrokers, gun dealers, quick-loan pit stops ("Advance Til Payday Up to $255 Instant Cash"), barbershops (the Pentagon, the Drop Zone-Foxhole)—all the stuff that adds up to a "retail-based service economy," which is the Chamber of Commerce euphemism for how Fayetteville is an easy enough place to find a job but a hard place to find one that pays more than ten dollars an hour. If it comes to pass that thirty thousand Fort Bragg troops get deployed halfway around the world (and if a lot of their wives and children leave town and go stay with the grandparents)—which is precisely what happened for several months in 1990 and 1991, courtesy of the Gulf War—the entire blighted landscape will begin to swirl down the drain.

I did meet one unapologetic war profiteer in Justina Karali, but in her defense I must point out that she was an inadvertent war profiteer. Karali is the owner of Uptown Undies, a naughty-lingerie shop that happened to be across the street from my hotel. Even if it hadn't been so conveniently situated, I would have found my way there, though not out of any prurient interest. Rather, with a keen sense of journalistic duty, I forced myself to go inside because I had read about Karali's establishment in a Gulf War-vintage newspaper clipping. Her memories of Desert Shield/Desert Storm were vivid and happy.

"We're a very customer-oriented business," she told me. "We just treat folks in such a way that they want to come back. During the Gulf War, we had lots of regular customers who came in and asked, 'What can I send to my man overseas to let him know I'm thinking of him?' So we started selling lots of little teeny lingerie ensembles—things that said 'Hurry home.' And they had to be lightweight so they could fit in an envelope. Well, panties—sexy, lacy—fit in an envelope. And if they're crotchless, it's even lighter. This wasn't Grandma's underwear. This was a little bit of passion that a soldier could wear under his helmet—something he could take out and show to his buddies and say, 'Hey, want to see what my wife sent me?'—a token, close to his heart, only he kept it close to his head. And then, when the troops came home, we sold a lot of other things: Kama Sutra oils, massage lotions, adult board games, edible undies. You'll notice that this store also carries a few things for men—novelty items and thongs. We have thongs in all colors. We even have camouflage. But Fayetteville sees camouflage so much we don't move a lot of those."

How was Karali responding to the current state of global affairs?

"I've always carried the same products over the years," she said. "I'm stocking up, mainly on garters and panties. Even though people are feeling very patriotic, I'm sticking with the traditional reds and blacks, instead of red, white, and blue. This town is looking at this war very differently. That's certainly the sense I get from my customers. People quit spending in September for a couple of weeks, but in last week's payroll I went ahead and gave my employees a patriotic bonus. We have to be in a positive frame of mind for our customers, because that's what they deserve. That and something lacy."

On Hay Street, downtown, opposite the site formerly occupied by Rick's Lounge (in its prime, the most celebrated strip joint east of the Mississippi), I spent an hour one afternoon at the Airborne & Special Operations Museum, which had opened last year. I was there long enough to take in all the attractions except the Pitch, Roll & Yaw Vista-Dome Motion Simulator, which I was willing to skip, mainly because I'd just eaten lunch.

As I made my way through the main exhibit hall—a comprehensive survey accompanied by disturbingly authentic sound effects, from the first combat jump (Algeria, 1942) through every subsequent conflict in which Airborne and Special Forces soldiers had played a role—I encountered several active-duty 82nd Airborne sol-

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diers. Only a couple of them wore their battle-dress uniforms, but they could all be easily identified by the universal Fort Bragg buzz cut (shaved sides and a barely brushable top). In the Vietnam section, where there was a full-scale diorama of soldiers emerging from a Huey helicopter, I had a conversation with a good-looking young blond guy named Chris Johnson. He'd already been through the museum several times, but his parents and his teenage sister had driven down from their home near Chicago, and he was giving them the tour.

Like most Army enlistees, he'd joined right after high school. That was two years ago.

"I signed up as a combat engineer," he said.

"Emphasis on *engineer*," said his father, Carl, who was standing nearby.

"I didn't sign up for the Airborne," Chris continued. "I was thinking more of construction and demolition, not jumping out of planes. But when I finished my basic training I and ten guys from my company were picked and recommended for the Airborne. Now I have only a year left, and I'm thinking about other options. Maybe West Point. Maybe Special Forces."

The world was a different place when he enlisted, I said. At the time, had he imagined himself in a war?

"No, not at all, not really. At first, I wasn't thinking about combat. Now it's a more likely possibility. So far, I haven't really gone anywhere with the Army, except for a layover in Germany and three weeks in Kazakhstan. At this point, I'm looking forward to going wherever the action is, whatever action there is to find. That's what I've been training for. It'll fight off the boredom. Anyway, my bags are all packed."

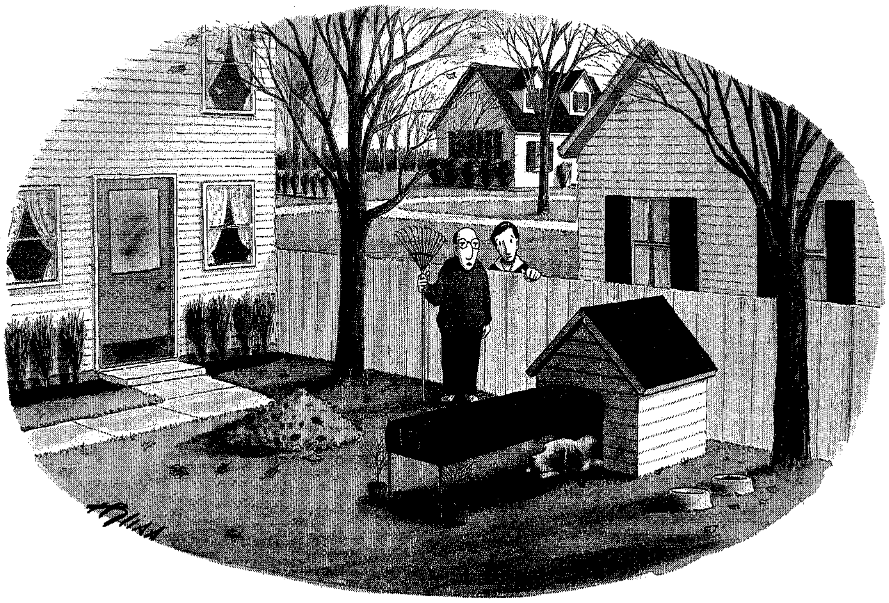
I asked Chris's mother, Irene, how often she had spoken with him since September 11th. "It used to be once a week," she said. "Now it's three or four times a week. He calls us, we call him. What do we talk about? Well, you can't keep talking about the same thing over and over, because it's a bunch of what-ifs. My father's been visiting us, from England, and he served in the Second World War. He says things like 'Wouldn't it be nice if Chris saw some action but didn't get hurt?' What do I do when he says that? I cringe. But, on the other hand, that's what a soldier's trained to do, isn't it, to go to war."

On a sunny Saturday morning, the seventh day of the new war, I continued my exploration of the specific practicalities—and the underlying emotional terrain—with which certain military spouses develop an uncomfortably intimate familiarity. Four Special Forces wives—Shanon, Tammy, Donna, and Rose—sat on a veranda and shared their thoughts about how and why, this time, everything felt different.

That they'd married men for whom illusions of any sort were an occupational hazard was a given. And so was this paradox: that certain illusions were necessary to maintain the equilibrium of their lives. The illusions were essential to the matrimonial contract, which was an agreement with rigorously parsed categories of what things they shouldn't say; what things they couldn't say because they didn't really know; and what things, even if they thought they knew them, they were better off not thinking. The ground rules of their marriages ("His mission is to protect America; mine is to make sure the mortgage gets paid on time and the children get to the dentist") derived from a shared understanding of the basic distinction between the "real world" as American civilians envisioned it (the nightly-news version) and the *real* real world they had come to know from experience—when, after an explosion shook some unpronounceable corner of the planet, the telephone rang, and then a husband hung up the receiver and packed his bags and disappeared. There could be no mistaking that this war had no precedent, because, this time, the real world had shown up on their doorstep. The wives were accustomed to the question "Who dies next, the enemy or us?"—when the "us" meant members of the United States military. But "us" now could also mean *us*—perpetually anxious civilians walking to work, sitting in office buildings, riding public transportation, attending sporting events, marching in parades, shopping at the mall, inhaling, swallowing, praying.

At certain Fort Bragg command posts, a lockdown went into effect on September 11th and no one was allowed to leave. Not long after Donna's husband walked through the front door the next day, he was in tears. "He cried about the Twin Towers and about how helpless he felt," she said. "And my husband is just not like that. He's tough, and it was disheartening to see him that way, to see how vulnerable he was."

Tammy said, "My husband says maybe ten words a month. And whenever it happens you better be listening, because it ain't gonna happen again.



*"He's having a tough time letting go of the Upper East Side."*

You just don’t know, so you’ve gotta be ready. When he came home that next morning, we were at that security level where we had guards patrolling our neighborhood, we had floodlights, searchlights, and concertina wire. I’ve got three sons—ten, eight, and seven. Even though they’ve known all their lives that their daddy’s in the Special Forces, I’m thinking, This is not what I intended for my kids. I’ve got an eight-year-old asking, ‘Do terrorists go to Heaven?’ I’m thinking, This is not part of my plan.

“I think when my husband saw us—me, the boys, hearing their questions—that’s when the reality hit him. You have to understand, I never see him get upset. I never see him lose it, anger-wise. But he was furious. We left him alone. He was in the garage getting his gear together. He’s a dive guy. He was throwing fins and things. Anyone who’s ever been in combat doesn’t want to go back, if he’s in his right mind. But in this situation he was ready to go kick ass. And my sons were in shock, because Daddy don’t lose it like that. After those couple of hours, throwing stuff all over the garage, he finally came inside and sat with us and we all watched a video together. And pretty soon things were, like, ‘O.K., Dad’s cool. He’s the man.’ ”

Shanon said, “When my husband came home, he was, like, ‘I hope Americans realize what the military does.’ That’s why we’re a secure country. For some reason, the military is the one thing Americans have always looked at as being overpaid. But now we’re the ones they look to for security. It’s like my mother-in-law. She’s calling every day, asking, ‘Is he going? Is he going?’ My response to her is, like, ‘He’s been gone for long periods for years, and you’ve never shown any concern before.’ ”

Rose said, “When I saw what happened to those policemen and firemen in New York, all those emergency personnel, my first thought was that someone had called 911 and they responded. They went to do their jobs. And when so many of them died, we understood. Because when the world calls 911, Fort Bragg responds.”

What’s next? I asked. More of what we’ve already seen, the women agreed.

“I’m surprised we haven’t had a crucial hit before,” Tammy said. “These terrorists, they’re so patient. My husband believes in what he’s doing. Well, they do, too. And when you have that kind of intensity it scares the hell out of me. Like I said, this is not the plan I had for my sons. But we will prevail because of the renewed sense of patriotism. I’ve been on a high for, like, three weeks. I’ve been soaking all this stuff up, because I can’t help it. I’ve wanted to see and hear the most real of the real. To see communities come together the way they have—that’s phenomenal. To have everybody, all across the nation, saying the Pledge of Allegiance at two o’clock yesterday, that really got to me. We need to see this all the time.

“And I just want to say one more thing,” Tammy continued, leaning forward, looking me in the eye. “And you can write this down with my first and last names and my address: I am so thankful every day in my heart that President Bush is our President and Commander-in-Chief, because there’s no way in hell that we could have done this with who was in office before. And if you see Senator Clinton you can tell it to her face. There’s no way Bill Clinton could have handled this. He would have overanalyzed everything. It took someone raised the way George Bush was, with the ethics and morality that his parents instilled in him, the faith and belief that they have in God—they’re real. He’s not double-talking. He’s not trying to smooth things over like a politician. When he speaks, it’s to the point. A child can listen to President Bush speak and get the gist of what he’s saying.”

The conversation lasted for more than an hour, and Tammy had done most of the talking. No one minded, though I doubted whether her taciturn Marlboro Man husband would have been thrilled. In fact, she said at one point, he’d phoned her that morning and, presumably in ten words or fewer, reminded her to be discreet.

Hmm. A Saturday-morning phone call could only mean that he’d already been deployed. Quickly, she tried to cover her tracks. “I do actually know where he is right now. And I know what he’s doing.” We all sat quietly for a moment, as the next thought crossed our minds: Any day now, she wouldn’t. ♦

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## ANNALS OF COMMUNICATIONS

# LEVIATHAN

*How much bigger can AOL Time Warner get?*

### BY KEN AULETTA

At AOL Time Warner, as everywhere else, life has been altered dramatically since September 11th. The company has donated hundreds of wireless mobile communicators to law-enforcement personnel, produced fund-raising concerts, contributed more than five million dollars to the recovery effort, and persuaded AOL subscribers to donate more than fifteen million dollars. The company also lost considerable income (the company claims not to know these costs) as movie and magazine schedules have been disrupted and costs at the Cable News Network and *Time* have risen sharply. Nevertheless, the world's largest and most powerful communications company has not lost sight of its primary goal—to encircle and seduce consumers. The resources of the company have been marshalled for the November launch of its movie "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone." Richard D. Parsons, the co-chief operating officer of AOL Time Warner, told me this summer, "You're not going to be able to go anywhere without knowing about it. This could be a bigger franchise than 'Star Wars.' "

That may not be an extravagant boast. The Harry Potter books have already sold about a hundred and twenty million copies worldwide, and AOL Time Warner is poised to capitalize on that beginning. America Online connects half of all American Internet users from their homes, and its subscribers—they number thirty-one million—will be led to various links, including those to Harry Potter merchandise that the company licenses and sells. Moviefone, which AOL Time Warner owns, will promote and sell tickets. The magazine division, with more than a hundred and sixty titles, among them *Time*, *People*, *Entertainment Weekly*, *Fortune*, and *Sports Illustrated*, will feature ads and contests and innumerable cover stories. Warner Bros. studio, which made the movie, will advertise on Time Warner cable systems, which reach about twenty per cent of American homes wired with cable television, and on Turner Broadcasting, which owns four of the top ten cable networks, and will air promotions for the movie. Warner Music Group will produce the soundtrack and sell the CDs and tapes. The company's ad-sales people sold the exclusive global rights to promote the film (and its sequel) to Coca-Cola, for a hundred and fifty million dollars. And AOL members, who last year spent twenty billion dollars in online purchases, will have the opportunity to buy merchandise ranging from toothbrushes to T-shirts. In all, AOL Time Warner's hundred and thirty-seven million subscribers—twice the combined total of its two nearest non-telephone-company competitors, News Corp. and Vivendi—will find it impossible to avoid that bespectacled lad Harry Potter.

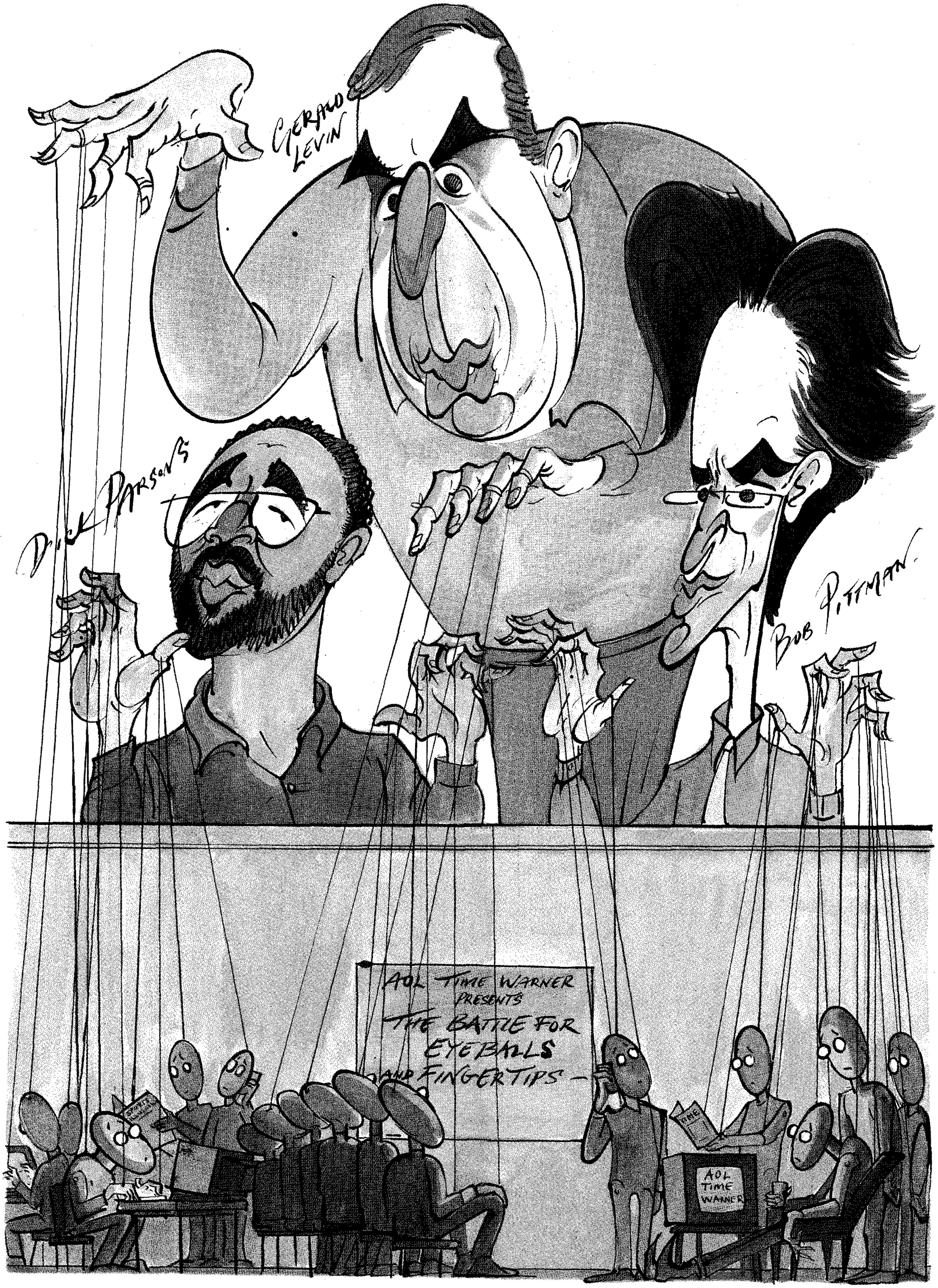
The Potter offensive—like all the company's plans to lure customers—was orchestrated at what is called the C.E.O. meeting, on the thirty-fourth floor of Rockefeller Center's Time Life Building. The company has nine divisions, and twice a month C.E.O.s from these divisions meet with fourteen other senior executives for a discussion that usually lasts three to four hours. A seat at one end of the twenty-two-foot-long table is reserved for Gerald Levin, the C.E.O. of the entire company; at the other end, at the corners, are the two co-chief operating officers, Parsons and Robert W. Pittman. A voice-amplification system insures that everyone is heard. Noises from outside are muted by a gray fabric that covers the walls. Motorized window shades slide down if too much sun streams into the windows facing the Hudson River, to the west. Most of the executives wear the new-media uniform of open-necked shirts and no jackets.

Many people once thought that Levin was miscast as a C.E.O. He has a high-pitched voice, a lofty manner, slightly dishevelled short, sandy hair, and a chin that sinks into his neck. When it was announced, in January of 2000, that AOL was acquiring Time Warner, he was widely judged to be a brilliant apparatchik who would soon be gone. Now, Barry Diller, the C.E.O. of USA Networks, says, "He's the only one in the picture. He is, without any question or qualification, the single most powerful person in media and communications."

No communications company touches as many consumers, or controls so many interlocking pieces. AOL delivers twice as much mail as the United States Postal Service. Time Inc. is the world's largest magazine publisher, selling a quarter of all consumer-magazine advertising. Time Warner Cable is the nation's second-largest cable company, and its Roadrunner provides more high-speed access to the Internet than any competitor. Warner Bros. is one of the seven major movie studios, and has a library of seven thousand feature films, thirty-two thousand TV programs, and thirteen thousand animated features. Turner Broadcasting generates more revenue than any other cable network, and CNN reaches about a billion viewers around the world. HBO pioneered pay television, and now ranks No. 1, with hits like "The Sopranos" and "Sex and the City." The company is also one of five music giants, owning more than a million music copyrights.

Levin and Steve Case, the chairman, have publicly stated their mission to make AOL Time Warner "the premier growth company" and "the most valued and respected company in the world"—worth more than Exxon, General Electric, or General Motors. If they succeed, AOL Time Warner will become a global corporate superpower, richer than

GERALD SCARFE


GERALD LEVIN
DICK PARSONS
BOB PITTMAN.
AOL TIME WARNER PRESENTS THE BATTLE FOR EYEBALLS AND FINGERTIPS —
AOL TIME WARNER
TIME

*Richard Parsons (at left) and Robert Pittman (at right) may one day get Gerald Levin's job of running the media giant.*

Microsoft. Diller sees Microsoft and AOL Time Warner as "the two world powers of interconnectivity."

AOL Time Warner has a simple way of measuring its success: growth and profit. "We're running the company through the financial function," Levin told Wall Street analysts in July. Earlier in the year, the company had announced a year-end goal of eleven billion dollars in earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization—a growth of thirty per cent. This would mean a doubling in size every three years or so. Levin and his associates also anticipated profit margins of thirty per cent, and they predicted revenues that would top forty billion dollars. The company monitors these targets at the C.E.O. meetings, where the chief financial officer, J. Michael Kelly, reviews each division's quarterly performance. The reason for the aggressive growth targets, Kelly says, is that "we needed to put some financial goals out there so people could get their heads around us. It was a way of filling in the education process as we go along." Levin, although he has often derided short-term Wall Street thinking, concedes, "I'm a hawk on margins."

Since January, AOL Time Warner has cut about eight thousand jobs. But more than cost-cutting will be required if the company is to grow by nearly a third each year. It must also invent new businesses, or new ways of managing old businesses, and that is why the focus of the C.E.O. meetings is on synergy and teamwork. Each division of the company becomes, in part, a promotional and sales vehicle—a shill—for the others. Harry Potter T-shirts can be promoted on AOL, then sold at the AOL online store. Advertising can be sold by combining television and print and cable into a single sales package. Magazine subscriptions can be sold by using AOL. Madonna CDs can be sold through AOL contests and through a *People* feature story that becomes a CNN special. HBO subscriptions are promoted when its shows are put on magazine covers. Because AOL Time Warner has what Levin described to Wall Street analysts as "leverage points," it has considerable sway over artists, producers, competitors, advertisers, and consumers.

The unspoken assumption of leverage—this new business arithmetic—is that one plus one equals four; that the resources of the company will permit it to use technology to create new businesses. "If I look at AOL today at

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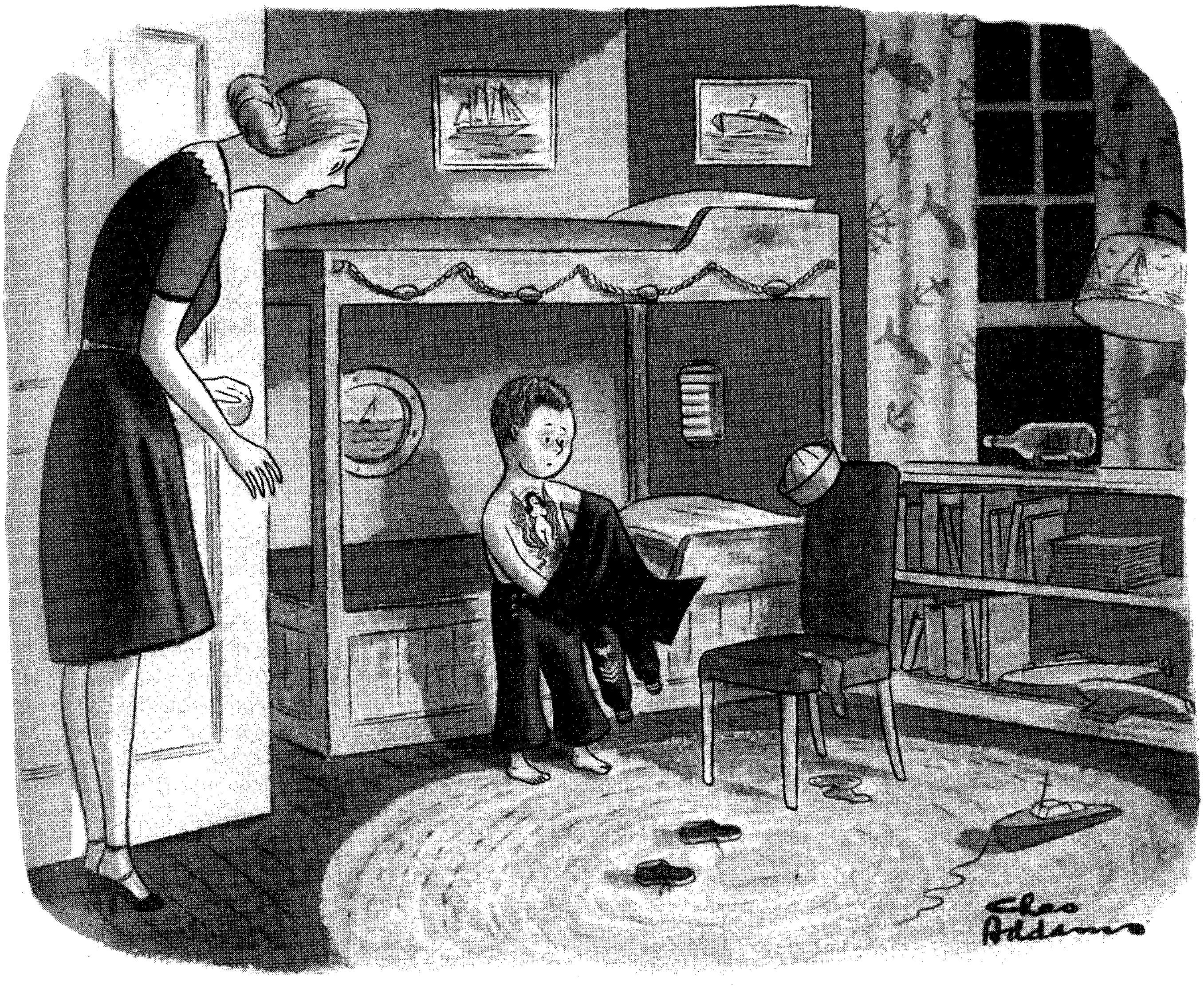
MAY 19, 1945



twenty-four dollars per household, ten years from now that could be seventy or one hundred dollars, when you think that you won't have to buy CDs or rent from the video store or go to the telephone company and AOL will service your wireless devices," Barry Schuler, the C.E.O. of the AOL division, says. AOL Time Warner hopes in that way to become the Wal-Mart of the information age, a one-stop-shopping company.

Driving this new math are Bob Pittman and Dick Parsons, both of whom occupy offices on the twenty-ninth floor of 75 Rockefeller Center. In May of 2000, the company was divided into two basic groupings: subscriptions (AOL, the magazines, the cable systems and networks), under Pittman; and content (movies, music, books, and some staff functions), under Parsons. Although the merger is less than a year old, there is constant discussion about how one division may help another. For instance, the magazine division is already recruiting, through AOL, a hundred thousand new subscribers per month, charging subscriptions to the same credit cards that consumers used for their AOL subscriptions. "The subscriptions from AOL are evergreen," Parsons said. "It keeps coming until you order it to stop." The magazines avoid expensive mailings, and customers may not be aware that they have become perpetual subscribers.

The effectiveness of this cross-promotion was demonstrated in January of 2000, when the WB television network launched the show "Popstars," in which young women competed to form a new pop group. Roger Ames, the C.E.O. of the music group, offered to award a Warner Music contract to the winner, and AOL's Schuler promised to create "buzz" by featuring the program on the AOL welcome screen and in ads that asked the audience to come up with a name for the group; Don Logan, the C.E.O. of Time Inc., offered a full-page ad and a sweepstakes contest in *Entertainment Weekly*, plus promotions on Time Inc. Web sites. The numbers were impressive: the CD of the new band, called Eden's Crush, débuted at No. 6 on *Billboard's* two hundred chart; and its single, "Get Over Yourself," was the No. 1 single in America. "They became a phenomenon," Parsons said. "A manufactured phenomenon."

CHARLES ADDAMS

For Aurora Wallace, an instructor in New York University's Department of Culture and Communication, the company's constant cross-promotion and selling "empties content of anything but a consumption message. If every part of the company has to serve every other part of the company, there's no incentive to talk about anything else," she told me. "It's not evil. It's logical, according to corporate logic. The problem is that we expect the media to do other things. To inform us. To provide social glue. If that glue is only about consumption, we are missing something. It creates a grand illusion of choice."

AOL Time Warner, meanwhile, hopes for profits from various sources—including services such as AOLTV, which combines the television and the Internet. Apart from the commercial possibilities of AOL itself, the company hopes to increase sales of telephone service over the cable wires and of software from its Netscape subsidiary, and also to charge other companies for access to its high-speed Internet connection. These multiple sources of revenue are what sets AOL Time Warner apart. "This is not a media company anymore, it's not an Internet company," Levin told investors last January. "It truly is a one-of-a-kind company."

That is precisely what makes critics uneasy. "Since AOL Time Warner has power over the infrastructure through its cable wire and its TV-set-top cable box and its AOL Internet access, it has control," Lawrence Lessig, a professor of law at Stanford, said. "My fear is not because it's big. I fear its opposition to the next best thing, since that threatens the company." Lessig continued, "Every dinosaur would like to stop evolution. Nature didn't give dinosaurs that opportunity. But technology could give AOL Time Warner that opportunity to stop evolution."

The merger of AOL and Time Warner might not have occurred if Gerald Levin's son, Jonathan, a high-school teacher in a tough Bronx neighborhood, had not been murdered, in 1997, by a former student. Fay Vincent, a director of the company and a friend of Levin, recalls, "I don't think I ever saw a guy so devastated. He couldn't walk at the funeral. It was a defining moment." Levin told Vincent and Parsons that he was thinking of quitting, and for the next two months he stayed away from the office. Then, he says, he had something like a revelation. When I asked him about Jonathan's death, Levin sipped some bottled water and at first did not reply. His eyes moistened, and he said, "That's why I'm on a mission. I've obviously been an idealist my whole life, and I guess it always bothered me—I didn't want to be a C.E.O., I didn't want to be a corporate type. But, the way it worked out, I was always satisfied to live through my son. What he was doing was the highlight of my life. . . . I thought at the time I wasn't going to return to the company. And then I decided, 'Let's see if I can make happen through my position some pretty important things, and carry on in that way.' " He went on, "Maybe that's why nothing can affect me. So I'm more fearless, more of a missionary. There's nothing anyone can say to me, do to me, write about me, that can affect me. I used to care somewhat because it affected the stock price. Now it's his view that I care about." Levin has established the Jonathan Levin Fund, to benefit Taft High School, where Jonathan taught. The fund has already paid for a new athletic field with state-of-the-art facilities, a media center, and college scholarships.

Levin told me that reading Albert Camus had changed his life. One day, he quoted a passage from "The Stranger," in which the protagonist watches himself as if from outside his body. "Fortunately, or unfortunately, that's what I've always felt," Levin said. "That I'm here, but I'm actually on the outside looking at it, analyzing it, thinking about it, and when I look for deeper meaning I can't find meaning attached to the connection of events." With Jonathan's death, Levin was able to connect the two opposing strands of Camus. "One finds meaning only if there is a larger purpose," he said.

Levin's grandparents came to America from Eastern Europe and opened a butter-and-egg store in Philadelphia, which his father ran. His mother was a piano teacher. It was an Orthodox Jewish home, and Jerry, the youngest of three children, read Hebrew. In high school, he won public-speaking contests and starred in school plays. He had a prodigious memory, and dazzled friends by reciting batting averages and Academy

FLY
TRAVEL
POVEY

*"It all looks so great. I can't wait to be disappointed."*

• •

Award winners going back many years. At Haverford College, he studied Biblical literature and philosophy but soon gravitated toward English; he wanted to be a professor. One of his happiest moments at Haverford occured in an English honors class, when he, two other students, and the professor sat under a tree and read aloud their short stories. However, when he was chosen as the college's valedictorian and honored for his senior thesis, Levin announced that he was rejecting the honor and burning the paper.

"I'm not saying that I don't have an ego, but I'm a pretty strange person," Levin told me. "I really don't care that much about what people think of me. That's why I always thought I'd be a professor. I'm much more interested in analyzing things. As a kid, I always challenged questions. . . . The definition of change is that you don't accept anything as a given. You kind of challenge everything. The personality type that can handle that has to be very comfortable in his skin. I'm quite a risk-taker. I'm willing to put everything at risk."

After graduation, Levin toyed with the idea of becoming a novelist and thought that being a lawyer would support this endeavor. He graduated from the University of Pennsylvania Law School in 1963. He then began practicing antitrust law in New York with Simpson Thacher & Bartlett. He moved in 1967 to an international investment-and-management company established by David Lilienthal, the former chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission and the Tennessee Valley Authority. The experience helped to convince Levin that business was his proper calling. He joined Time Inc. in 1972 to help develop a new pay-cable service called Home Box Office.

It was at HBO that, in 1975, Levin, as C.E.O., decided to distribute programs nationally by satellite—in some ways, this signified the birth of the modern cable industry. He also tried to persuade his superiors to start a cable news service—not unlike the venture that Ted Turner launched in 1980. In 1984, when Levin became the company's principal strategic planner, he pushed Time Inc. to seek out various merger partners, and he looked for a merger that could transform the company. He focussed on Warner Communications, with its cable systems, movie and television studios, and music company. In 1989, Time Inc.'s C.E.O., Richard Munro, and his Warner counterpart, Steve Ross, announced that the companies would merge into Time Warner.

Within two years, Ross, who was ailing from prostate cancer, joined Levin to remove his co-C.E.O., Nicholas Nicholas; when Ross died, in December of 1992, Levin became the sole C.E.O. of Time Warner. Over the next decade, he insisted on broadening the company's cable investments, and thus its huge corporate debt, at a time when the market and members of his board were opposed to this strategy. He lost more than a hundred million dollars on a pioneering interactive-television experiment in Orlando, Florida; he lost an estimated forty million dollars on Pathfinder, an early interactive computer service not unlike AOL's; he watched the stock price plunge as he fired a succession of able executives; he watched the stock rise on reports that the Bronfman family would soon replace him. Even when he outwitted competitors and bought Turner Broadcasting, in 1995, it was supposed that Ted Turner would help engineer Levin's ouster. From the start, there were complaints that the company was too decentralized and that Levin was too weak to confront the executives who ran the movie, music, magazine, cable, and television divisions. He was seen as a drone by the entertainment world, a dreamy visionary by Wall Street, and something of a schemer inside the company. Few saw him as he saw himself: an outsider who dared to be bold.

Levin began holding merger talks with Steve Case, the chairman of AOL, in the fall of 1999. Case recalls that he knew Levin was "a believer" in interactivity via television or the Web, and that "the social issues"—statements of corporate values, "the public trust," and corporate philanthropy—were important to Levin, who was searching for what he unabashedly calls "a pulpit." There was one other vital thing Case knew, according to Kenneth Novack, who has been AOL's longtime lawyer and is now the vice-chairman of the merged companies: "We believed that the only basis on which Time Warner would be prepared to do a merger with us was if Jerry was the C.E.O. and it was perceived as a merger of equals."

In an appearance at the 92nd Street Y in the fall of 2000, Levin spoke about the talks and about a decisive phone call he had received in November from Case. "There's a kind of mating dance, and then there are all these profound questions, like who is going to run the company, which shouldn't be the first question, but unfortunately it is," Levin said. In this initial conversation, Case said that if they could merge the companies Levin should be C.E.O. and Case would be chairman. "I work better at this sort of strategic level," Case remembers telling him. Each saw a good fit. For AOL, Time Warner provided access to rich content, and could offer a distribution system (the cable). For Time Warner, AOL solved the Internet puzzle it had been unable to master. In merging new media with old, the deal could infuse both companies with high-voltage energy. Consulting only with Parsons and with a former chief financial officer, Richard Bressler, and also with a few directors like Fay Vincent, Levin and Case reached an agreement in less than two months to exchange stock that was then valued at a hundred and forty-seven billion dollars.

Although they called it a merger of equals, the "new media" company had a higher market valuation and was in fact the acquirer. (Today, after the dot-com bust, Time Warner would no doubt be the acquirer.) As usually happens in a merger, "cultural issues" ensnared the companies at the start. "At first, the AOL people acted like they had acquired us," one senior Time Warner executive says. AOL was a young business whose revenues and profits were growing at an exponential rate; many of Time Warner's divisions were mature businesses. In May of 2000, four months after the merger announcement, Levin and Case decided that the competition and the technology were changing so swiftly that they could not afford to wait for federal approval to impose centralized oversight; Dick Parsons and Bob Pittman were put in charge of the company's two main divisions.

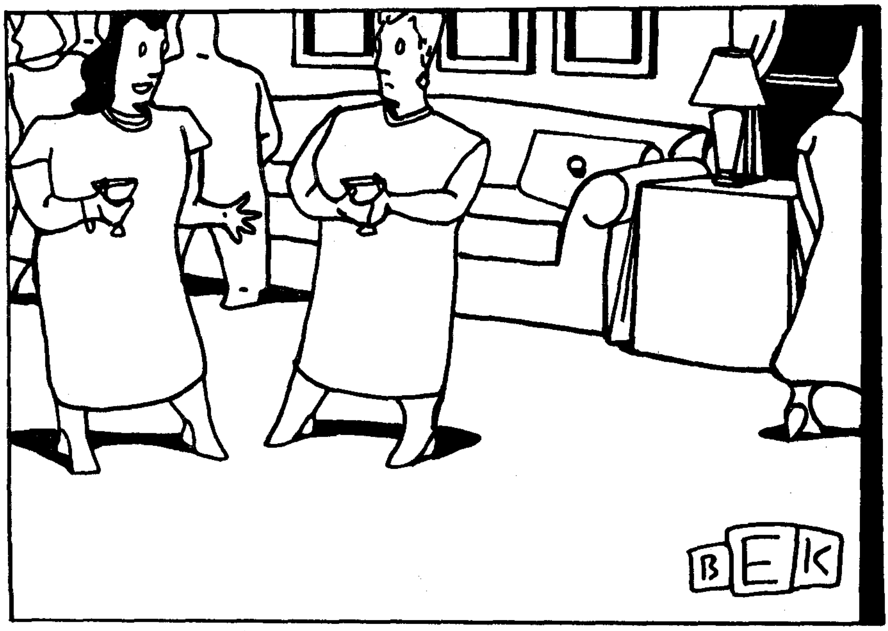
Opposition to the merger was at times ferocious. Corporations, such as Disney, and consumer groups worried that AOL Time Warner could try to trap consumers in what is called "a walled garden" of its own content, shutting out competitors and nonprofit community groups. "AOL Time Warner will be like an air-traffic controller, deciding who gets landing rights and who gets gates," said Jeffrey Chester, the executive director of the nonprofit Center for Digital Democracy, one of the consumer groups questioning the merger. "They can make sure that their services and content get preferential treatment."

When Steve Case was asked about his putative walled garden, he said, "The point people are making is partially accurate, but the intended takeaway is not. I do believe consumers want diversity, they want choice. But they also want simplicity." Case's assumption is that consumers want to be free to drive where they wish but don't mind if someone else negotiates through traffic. Levin sounds unconcerned about the issue, because he believes that his company will heed "a code of honor" and, no matter its size or power, police itself.

The size and power of the new AOL Time Warner appealed in any case to investors, who saw that the company's 2000 revenues, of thirty-six billion dollars, far exceeded those of Disney, the No. 2 communications company (nearly twenty-six billion), Viacom (twenty billion), Vivendi/Universal (almost eighteen billion), Bertelsmann (almost sixteen billion), and News Corp. (fourteen billion). Consumer groups and competitors, however, petitioned the government to either block the merger or impose conditions to insure diversity. Opponents worried, as well, about privacy—about all the information on its subscribers that the company was collecting. When the merger was approved, on January 11th of this year, the chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, William Kennard, announced a few conditions to insure that some competing Internet service providers would have access to the cable that AOL Time Warner monopolizes in many markets. That still does not satisfy critics like Lawrence Lessig, who continues to worry about AOL Time Warner's ability to favor its own content and to control access to the Internet.

Together or separately, Bob Pittman and Dick Parsons are expected to succeed Gerald Levin; and, together or separately, both believe that, for their new company, big is good and bigger is better. Pittman, who is forty-seven, is unapologetically devoted to profits, and is a firm believer that the company's divisions ought to coöperate with—and promote—each other. He is the younger of two sons, and was born in rural Mississippi. His father was a Methodist pastor who became a district superintendent of the church. His mother was a schoolteacher who later worked in her husband's ministry.

One Thanksgiving when Bob was in the fifth grade, a horse on his grandparents' farm threw him and stepped on his face, and he lost the sight in his right eye. "As a kid, the last thing you want to be is different," Pittman told me. "If you have an artificial eye, you're different. The dream of every kid is to fit in and be like all the other kids." Tom Pittman, who is three years older than his brother, is the editor and publisher of the DeSoto



*"I had a lot of nine-to-five jobs before I realized I needed to pretend to be creative."*

*Times Today*, a Mississippi daily. After the accident, he said, his brother "wanted to be accepted. So he had to figure out how to be accepted."

The following year, a family friend took him up in a two-seater plane. Pittman recalls, "It changed my life. I couldn't imagine anything greater." He was determined to fly, even though he was told that with only one eye he was unlikely to have the depth perception to pass a pilot's test. He wanted to take flying lessons, and his parents told him he would have to get a job to pay for them. At fifteen, he became a disk jockey, playing rock and country music and Top 40 records at a daytime radio station, WCHJ-AM, in Brookhaven, Mississippi. "I even did the swap shop on the air. Where you go"—his voice rises as he recalls the pitch he once used—" 'O.K., we got someone here who's got two pigs and we'll trade them for a bicycle. Here's the phone number if you want to call.' " His parents worried that he was spending too much time at the radio station. Bob took flying lessons, and moved to better stations. He played the music that he and his friends liked. "I thought this was the most wonderful career," Pittman says. "Girls called the request line. The hormones kicked in." He was a freshman at Millsaps College and a d.j. on the night shift of a Top 40 market station. He wanted more of it.

He mailed his résumé, and a Milwaukee station offered him a job. He packed up a Dodge Dart and, with his mother sobbing, left Mississippi; he never returned to college. He went from Milwaukee to Detroit to Pittsburgh. He saw that radio listeners were young, and he pressed his program directors to do more consumer research. He often made survey calls himself. "I learned an important lesson," he said. "Don't play what I like, but play what people like."

WMAQ-AM, an NBC-owned station in Chicago, hired Pittman in 1974. The ratings climbed, and, when NBC's president, Herbert Schlosser, visited the station, he was impressed by the young man with an announcer's voice. In 1977, Pittman was offered a job in New York, as the program manager of the network's flagship station, WNBC-AM, and the host of a weekly video-music TV show, "Album Tracks," which went on after "Saturday Night Live." He was twenty-three, and in radio circles was known as "the boy wonder." Pittman had long hair and a mustache that curved down at the ends, and he wore shimmering shirts with long, pointed collars. But at NBC, Schlosser remembers, "Some people were wary of his success." Two years later, after Schlosser left NBC, Pittman accepted an offer from Warner Amex Satellite Entertainment to enter the cable business; he became chief programmer for the Movie Channel. The executive vice-president there, John Lack, who recruited Pittman, had thought of creating an all-music channel. Pittman, with others, refined this idea, proposing that music videos produced by record companies should be played on television just as records were on the radio. When the company resisted the idea, Pittman appealed directly to the C.E.O.s of the two parent companies, Steve Ross, of Warner, and James Robinson, of American Express. Music Television (MTV) was launched in 1981; Pittman was made chief operating officer in 1982, and C.E.O. the following year. "I never dreamed I'd be a business guy," Pittman told me recently, sounding like Gerald Levin. "I thought I was a creative guy." So did his immediate superiors, who thought he was too headstrong by insisting that they start other cable networks, including Nickelodeon, for children, and VH1, for mature music fans.

Pittman believed in forging emotional bonds with consumers on the basis of generational solidarity and adolescent rebellion. He recognized that MTV could build its own brand. "This was saying, 'We're going to be a home base for teen-agers,' " says Geraldine Laybourne, a former teacher whom Pittman promoted to head Nickelodeon. "He got under teen-agers' skin. He figured out how to talk to them and make them feel 'This is my network. This is not normal TV.' "

In 1979, Pittman married Sandy Hill. The pair appeared regularly in gossip columns, and in 1983 had a son. Two years later, Warner and Amex sold their share of MTV to Viacom, and the following year Pittman left for less glamorous television ventures, including the "The Morton Downey Jr. Show," an insult-the-guest talk program that he invented and produced. By 1989, Pittman was back at Warner, working as a senior adviser to Steve Ross. After Warner and Time Inc. merged, Pittman was named C.E.O. of Time Warner Enterprises, with a mandate to find and incubate new ventures. One such venture was Court TV; its founder, Steve Brill, had enticed Ross to invest, and Ross turned the project over to Pittman and to Pittman's deputy, Mayo Stuntz. Another venture was Six Flags, a financially troubled group of amusement parks that Pittman restored to health.

In 1995, three years after Ross's death, Henry Silverman, an old friend of Ross's and the C.E.O. of the Cendant conglomerate, recruited Pittman to run the group's nationwide real-estate franchiser, Century 21. Pittman approached real estate as he did everything: he tried to make it easy for consumers to understand. Why not, he thought, take the real-estate business online? It would be an inexpensive way to market real estate and home loans to people who had to relocate—and it would improve communication within the company. The online service that most appealed to Pittman was AOL, which had begun in 1985 and was, he thought, relatively easy to use. He told Steve Case that Century 21 would become one of AOL's first advertisers—and, at a million dollars per year, its most important one. Of AOL, Pittman recalls, "I was spending one-thirtieth of what I spent on TV and I was getting five times the number of real-estate leads." When Pittman began at Century 21, the company was breaking even; after his first year, it earned twenty-five million dollars, Silverman says. In two years, it earned a hundred million dollars.

In 1996, with Silverman's reluctant acquiescence, Pittman left real estate and became the president of AOL Networks. Although he recruited some familiar members of his own team, the most important personnel decision he made was to rely on the team that Case had assembled. At meetings, Case and Pittman sometimes had intense arguments. Ken Novack likened the partnership to two dancers who were "learning to dance with each other. Inevitably, they sometimes stepped on each other's toes." Yet, in the end, Case and Pittman together helped to steady AOL, which had gone through some difficult years. By 2000, AOL's stock was worth fifteen times what it had been in 1995. Pittman, meanwhile, had divorced, and married Véronique Choa,

# NEWS HEADLINES FROM THE HOMER NOBLE FARM

I
That case-hardened cop.
A bull moose in a bog-hole
brought him to a stop.

II
From his grassy knoll
he has you in his crosshairs,
the accomplice mole.

III
This sword once a share.
This forest a fresh-faced farm.
This stone once a stair.

IV
The birch crooks her arm,
as if somewhat more inclined
to welcome the swarm.

V
He has, you will find,
two modes only, the chipmunk:
fast forward; rewind.

VI
The smell, like a skunk,
of coffee about to perk.
Thelonious Monk.

VII
They're the poker-work
of some sort of woodpecker,
these holes in the bark.

VIII
My new fact checker
claims that *pilus* means "pestle."
My old fact checker.

IX
The Rose and Thistle.
Where the hummingbird drops in
to wet his whistle.

X
Behind the woodbin
a garter snake snaps itself,
showing us some skin.

XI
Like most bits of delf,
the turtle's seen at its best
on one's neighbor's shelf.

XII
Riding two abreast
on their stripped-down, souped-up bikes,
bears in leather vests.

XIII
The eye-shaded shrike.
BIRD BODIES BURIED IN BOG's
a headline he'll spike.

XIV
Steady, like a log
riding a sawmill's spill-way,
the steady coydog.

XV
The cornet he plays
was Bolden's, then Beiderbecke's,
this lonesome bluejay.

XVI
Some fresh auto wreck.
Slumped over a horn. Sump pool.
The frog's neck-braced neck.

XVII
Brillo pads? Steel wool?
The regurrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrgitations, what,
of a long-eared owl?

XVIII
The jet with the jot.
The drive-in screen with the sky.
The blood with the blot.

XIX
How all seems to vie,
not just my sleeping laptop
with the first firefly.

—*Paul Muldoon*

a graphic designer. They have a son and a daughter.

At AOL Time Warner, Pittman is respected, if not loved; he is all business. His meetings have agendas and his speeches are scripted. For years, as Barry Schuler recounts, ad agencies have insisted that "they can do better, more creative ads. Our commercials have consistently said one thing: 'Easy.' If you did research, seventy per cent of the respondents would say, 'AOL is easy.' Consumers hate technology. Bob sits with the ad people and simplifies. The ads are not designed to win awards or be funny. They're designed to deliver a simple message."

Richard Parsons, who is fifty-three, is the third member of the AOL Time Warner troika. He has a scruffy beard and a relaxed demeanor; he is nearly as focussed on profits and growth as Pittman and Levin are. Parsons is the first son and the second of five children raised in Brooklyn's Bedford-Stuyvesant section. His father, Lorenzo, was an electronics technician with the Sperry Rand Corporation; his mother, Isabelle, was a homemaker. When Richard was six, the family moved to South Jamaica, Queens. Parsons recalls, "I thought of it as a move to the country, a foreign country"—not because they were the only black family but because he was pulled away from friends and they now owned a home and could see trees. He was not self-conscious then, nor is he now, about his race. The only racial "incident" he ever experienced as a young man, he remembers, was on a summer family trip to Virginia, where he encountered separate drinking fountains for whites and blacks. "There is something to this notion of self-fulfilling prophecy," he told me. "If you go into a situation convinced people will treat you a certain way, you will perceive that they do. Second, to have a perception that I'm black almost inevitably creates barriers in your own mind. I think a lot of black people do that. . . . It never occurred to me I couldn't do anything." He attended public schools and was popular and a good athlete in baseball, basketball, and football. He was also smart, and skipped two grades.

Before Parsons took his S.A.T.s, he was allowed to choose three schools to receive his test results. "I put in Princeton," he recalls. "I put in City College. And I was staring at this one free box. . . . It popped into my head: University of Hawaii"—in his junior year he had sat next to an attractive girl who was from Hawaii. When the University of Hawaii accepted him, he was thrilled. He was only sixteen, and felt liberated. "I went a little crazy, I think," he said. "I had a job"—parking cars—"so I had some money. I had no parents around me, and I had no sense. So whooping it up was my thing. I'm not sure I was mature enough." He was a basketball star, and the social chairman of his fraternity for two years. "My specialty was parties." He loved beer, bridge, shooting pool, and music. In his sophomore year, in English class, he met a student from Oklahoma named Laura Bush. "He used to cut classes and do no work," she recalled. "I was helping him get through English. We started dating." She was white and nearly a foot and a half shorter than Parsons, who is six-four. And, as he remembers, she was as "stable" and "rational" as his father and as straightforward as his mother.

Parsons didn't have a clue as to what he wanted to do after graduation, and Laura suggested law school. He lacked six credits to graduate from college, but he did well on the L.S.A.T.s and was accepted by the Albany Law School of Union University. He and Laura were married in 1968; her father was so troubled by the marriage that he did not attend their wedding.

The couple moved into a two-family house next door to a funeral home; on the floor above was a prostitute, Laura recalls, "who was helping service Albany legislators." Laura worked as a secretary; Dick worked as a janitor at the law school. Despite these pressures, Parsons graduated first in his class in 1971, and got the highest grade in the state on his bar exam. Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller's office had heard about him, and soon he was working as a junior lawyer for Rockefeller's counsel. He grew close to the entire family,

*"We've changed 'Happy Hour' to 'An Interlude for Reflection.'"*

becoming involved in its investment strategy, wills, and art purchases. Parsons moved with Rockefeller to Washington when Rockefeller became Vice-President under Gerald Ford, in 1974, and when Rockefeller was dropped from the ticket, in 1976, Parsons and Laura and their three children moved to Pocantico Hills, the Rockefeller family compound in northern Westchester County.

In 1977, Parsons was hired by the former federal judge Harold R. Tyler, Jr., and joined the firm of Patterson, Belknap, Webb & Tyler. He soon made partner, and became friendly with another partner, Rudolph Giuliani; in 1984, Parsons was appointed managing partner of the firm. But he was growing bored with the law, and in 1988, when Harry Albright, a member of the Rockefeller "old-boy network," came forth with an irresistible proposition, Parsons grabbed it. Albright was preparing to retire as chairman and C.E.O. of the Dime Savings Bank, and approached Parsons about becoming president of the bank. A year later, during the savings-and-loan crisis, Parsons showed a sure hand. And it was the Rockefeller network that brought him to Time Inc.—in particular, to Time Inc.'s chairman, Andrew Heiskill, who, in 1990, introduced Parsons to Nick Nicholas. Nicholas subsequently recommended him to Steve Ross as a Time Warner director.

Parsons, meanwhile, had briefly involved himself in politics, and in 1993 served as the chairman of Giuliani's mayoral transition team. When he was asked to serve as a deputy mayor, however, he declined, and he also had no interest in seeking the Republican nomination for governor in 1994. (It eventually went to George Pataki.) "He has become increasingly discouraged by the quality of people in government," Laura Parsons says, as well as by the lack of privacy and by the ideological rigidity of "all these single-issue people." There was another reason for avoiding politics, a friend of Parsons told me: "He really doesn't like controversy if he can avoid it."

In late 1994, Levin, without consulting anyone, offered Parsons the presidency of Time Warner. "I'm not a big consultant of boards," Levin said. According to Parsons, in those days Levin "was operating as a one-man gang. If anything, he was looking for a partner."

After the merger with AOL was announced, there was speculation that Parsons would be the odd man out. Some thought that he didn't throw himself into company presentations with the gusto others did, that he wasn't an intensely focussed manager like Pittman. Unlike Levin, he relaxed and shut out work at his weekend home on Block Island, listening to jazz and barbecuing and shooting pool. He liked to spend time in Tuscany, where he and Laura owned a house and vineyard. Some people thought that perhaps he would accept a Cabinet position in the new Bush Administration. But those who assumed that Case and Pittman would take charge and that Parsons would leave did not reckon with Case's desire to cede power and Levin's to assume it. Nor did they factor in Parsons' guile.

Although Parsons rarely reads movie scripts or listens to demo tapes from recording artists or reads book manuscripts or proposals, he courts talent, and, of course, he controls the money that AOL Time Warner spends for talent. "What I do do is get involved in asset allocation," he said. Above all, people like him—Parsons is the one inside the company whom talented, vain executives want to deal with. "My job is to move around and cool out the younger horses," Parsons said. "I'm the pony horse."

Levin regards him as more than that: "If you wanted someone to go down to the F.C.C. or the F.T.C., there is no one better than Dick. And he makes these people feel good afterward. That's why I gave him the content business and people development in the company. Pittman got all the press. But what could be more important than people development in a company?"

The terrorist attacks of September 11th undoubtedly affected content at AOL Time Warner. Action movies like Arnold Schwarzenegger's "Collateral Damage," which features a bombed skyscraper, were postponed. Corporate cross-promotion campaigns, such as Warner Books' strategy to sell Jack Welch's business memoir, for which it paid seven million dollars, were slowed or stopped. CNN, after a long flirtation with Fox's cheaper, talk format (it even considered hiring the ultimate talking head, Rush Limbaugh), has returned, at least for now, to its roots as the foremost worldwide news network.

Before the attacks, Parsons and some executives from the pre-merger Time Warner worried that an emphasis on short-term profits could be harmful to the company over time. When I asked Parsons if the company was placing too much emphasis on its Wall Street audience, Parsons said yes. "This is a tension that as managers we have to deal with," Parsons said. "We're not a quarter horse. The quarter horse is the fastest animal in the world in a quarter of a mile. Because of lots of dynamics, increasingly the marketplace is demanding quarter-by-quarter performance that has the potential to undermine the long term." To build for the long term, he continued, the company must invest to expand overseas—investments that might take five years to succeed. He was not against pushing for aggressive targets. But since his responsibilities were mostly on content—movies, records, books—"I worry about it somewhat more than my colleagues," he said. "The content side is still a hit-driven business. If you're AOL or cable, you start the year with a set number of subscribers, and you can plan your growth. You've got a base. But, if you're Warner Bros. or Warner Music, every year you start with the till empty. Predictions are guesses."

Although Levin has become a true believer in managing by the numbers, the sense within the company is that the emphasis comes from the AOL side of the enterprise. Steve Case implicitly acknowledged this when I talked to him last summer in his office, where a portrait of glowering Henry Luce, the founder of *Time*, hangs on the wall. "A critique of the old Time Warner was that it was run almost as a holding company," Case said. "To some extent, this was true. It was a way to attract and keep strong managers who would each manage businesses independently. That was then. This is now. The markets are blurring and the technologies are converging, and now it is best to integrate the businesses. Now it's about building bridges and driving synergies, and these require a new culture that focusses on meeting the consumer's needs." To meet numerical targets "forces coöperation," he said. "Do I worry that short-term concerns about the numbers will retard investments? Yes. But at this stage the benefits outweigh the risks."

Despite substantial online profit margins, in late August AOL demonstrated its commitment to financial targets by announcing the layoff of twelve hundred employees—ten per cent of its workforce. The magazine division had more reason to be unhappy. To meet its profit and growth targets, the company speeded its cost cutting. Time Inc. offered buyouts to more than five hundred editorial employees who were fifty or older and had been with the company at least fifteen years. A fund to subsidize the first-year salaries of seventy minority employees was eliminated. The historic Time Inc. research library was closed, eliminating three dozen positions.

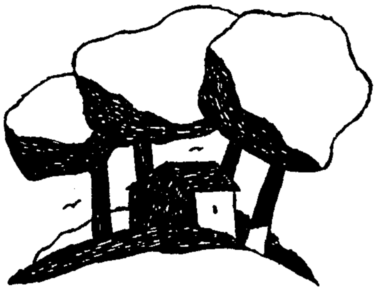
Senior corporate officers insist that they stand for editorial integrity; they would never censor a report or allow an advertiser to influence coverage. But journalists (who recognize Levin's commitment to the profession) are worried that a preoccupation with budgets and ratings will compromise the quality of their journalism, and that their bosses won't know the difference. Daniel Okrent, who in his career at Time Inc. has been the managing editor of *Life* and the editor of *New Media*, thinks that the changes at Time Inc. are momentous: "What I fear is that Time Inc. will become just another company. That it won't be special anymore."

In August, I asked Jamie Kellner, the C.E.O. of Turner Broadcasting, what he envisioned for CNN. "Part of my goal is to create excitement for the CNN brand," he said. He wanted to make CNN look less "stodgy," not only to attract more "eyeballs" but to keep "them a longer period of time," and he hoped to appeal to younger viewers. These, of course, are business, not journalistic, challenges, and it is a novel form of convergence that the men running AOL Time Warner often conflate the two.

After September 11th, Levin and Case suggested that they put aside management-by-numbers. At a September 24th C.E.O. meeting, Mike Kelly, the chief financial officer, skipped many of his charts; later, Levin and Case announced that the company would fall about two billion dollars short of its forty-billion-dollar revenue goal for the year, meaning that its earnings would rise a still impressive twenty per cent. Levin and Case also declared that news was now paramount. "Whatever CNN or *Time* wants, CNN and *Time* will get," Levin told colleagues. More than a few journalists at AOL Time Warner are dubious.

Last May, at a strategic retreat for directors and senior executives held at the Rye Hilton, in Westchester County, key elements missing from the immense AOL Time Warner portfolio were noted: broadcast news (there is only CNN), a broadcast sports outlet such as ESPN, an MTV-like cable-music network, and radio stations. For years, Ted Turner had pushed Time Warner to buy NBC. Of such an acquisition, Turner's successor, Kellner, says, "I think it would be great. I think bigger is better in the world of media." To own a broadcast network like NBC in addition to its relatively small WB network would give the company more leverage, because NBC owns most of its programming. CBS, by the fall of 2000, owned eighty-six per cent of its programming, and Disney's ABC owned fifty-seven per cent.

One panel at the retreat discussed the competition between Microsoft and AOL Time Warner. It was estimated that by 2004 about forty-four million homes would have high-speed access to the Internet, with control over the home network made possible by this "broadband pipe." This home network, Levin said in a July speech to investors, was the "final battlefield," the Waterloo that determines whether companies like his or Microsoft win or lose. According to Laurence J. Kirshbaum, the C.E.O. of Time Warner Trade Publishing, "Ultimately, it's a battle for the eyeball and for the fingertip on the button"—the computer keyboard or the remote control. "That's what it all boils down to." Levin clearly believes that AOL Time Warner, with its combination of content and distribution, has an advantage.



Although AOL Time Warner may be the world's most powerful communications company, today only eighteen per cent of its revenues come from outside the United States. Parsons hopes to double that number in ten years, he told a European journalist in June, when he went to Paris to open a new overseas corporate headquarters. Dick and Laura Parsons had flown over that weekend on one of the company's four jets. He went from breakfast to the new office building, just outside Paris, where, from a ninth-floor roof balcony, six hundred employees have a panoramic view of the city.

There, at a lunch with twenty-four employees from the company's various divisions, he said that he was aware of the human cost of layoffs, adding, "You almost can't overdo it on the sensitivity side." Three out of four corporate mergers fail, he said, and they fail because not enough attention is paid to "people" issues. He talked about the advantages of the merger, before getting to the subject high on his agenda. For the company to meet its target of thirty-per-cent growth annually, Parsons said, "it's got to come from outside the U.S."

*Time* magazine's international-advertising manager, Isabelle Mollat Du Jourdin, noted that the market share for all Time Inc. magazines in Europe was only between three and five per cent. She said that ownership of indigenous magazines was needed.

Parsons mentioned that the company was engaged in negotiations to purchase England's IPC Media, which owns more than a hundred magazines. (In July, AOL Time Warner announced the deal.) He urged the employees to think about how AOL could do more to promote magazine subscriptions, but Stephane Treppoz, the C.E.O. of AOL France, cautioned that AOL had a market share of twenty per cent in France—and only nine per cent in all of Europe, company officials say.

Because the French government requires that fifty per cent of all television programming, including movies shown on TV, be French-owned, "either we collaborate with French producers or we acquire companies," Michel Le Court, a

"I think Dad is the reason Mom never married."

vice-president of Warner Bros. International Television Distribution, said. (The European Union has a similar requirement.) Later, Parsons visited the set of a French movie that AOL Time Warner was co-producing; he was accompanied by Andrew Kaslow, his senior vice-president of people development, who had been on a family holiday.

In a speech that evening, at the new headquarters, as young employees spilled over the balcony and up and down the marble staircase, chatting noisily and ordering drinks from an open bar, Parsons said that it was the view of Steve Case, Gerald Levin, Bob Pittman, and himself that "at the end of the day it's all about people. Our fate is in your hands." Few heard a word of this speech, and, similarly, remarks by Kaslow were ignored.

On the plane heading back to New York that night, Dick and Laura Parsons occupied the four seats facing each other in the middle of the cabin. A dinner of broiled sole, rice, carrots, and Burgundy was served by the flight attendant, and the Parsonses invited Kaslow and his wife, Diane, to join them for the meal. For the next couple of hours, they chatted and laughed and seemed to have an agreeable time. The plane landed just after midnight.

The next day, AOL Time Warner issued a press release announcing the appointment of Patricia Fili-Krushel as its executive vice-president of administration. It was a new position, one that allowed the addition of a seasoned executive to oversee human resources, employee development, compensation, benefits, and security, and one that added the first female to the biweekly C.E.O. meeting. Fili-Krushel would report directly to Parsons, which meant that Andrew Kaslow would not. Kaslow still had an important job, but he reported to her.

I later talked to Parsons about his timing. He admitted that he had deliberately invited the Kaslows to dine on the plane in order to soften the blow. "Andy is a good man," he said. "He's a friend. But you know the old expression: This is business. It's very hard not to get the two, business and friendship, confused. I don't make friends at work the way I used to, because part of my job is to assess what the organization needs and to be very gimlet-eyed about it. If you allow friendships to cloud your judgment, you're not doing your job."

Looking back on the trip to Paris, he concluded that it was "not a spectacular day, but a good day." Symbolically, by opening a joint office and meeting with representatives from each division, he felt he was "breaking down the silos, in the old Time Warner in particular." To succeed, however, he believed that people—not numbers—were key. On the plane back from Paris, Parsons stared out the window and said, "Are we building things in this world that are beyond the state of our management? I don't know the answer. We are a huge global company. Do we know how to manage these things? Time will tell. But it is not clear to me that we do."

Case and Levin understand that corporations may be subject to the weaknesses of the people who run them, and that they may fail. Yet such thoughts were far from Levin's mind this summer, in the days before September 11th. After enduring years of corporate intrigue and second-guessing, Levin is the C.E.O. in fact as well as in name. Steve Case, who works closely with Levin on strategy and oversees the agenda of the board and of a monthly executive meeting, insists that he has no interest in being C.E.O. "It is not my strong suit to be an operational guy," Case says. "We have a strong team, and they're all better at managing the company day to day than I am." Levin and Case both guess that either Parsons or Pittman will become C.E.O., though Levin cautions, "I believe this company can't be managed by one person." Levin and Case hope that Pittman and Parsons, because each has skills the other lacks, will remain a team, no matter who gets the C.E.O. title.

But, Levin hastens to add, there is "no defined timetable" for succession, and he has no plan to leave anytime soon. Some associates believe that Levin plans to stay well beyond the usual retirement age, of sixty-five, three years hence. If there is friction between him and Case, Levin does not betray it. "For me, personally, this is the best it's ever been," Levin says. "It's probably facilitated because I certainly have no personal agendas. I'm not running for office. I'm not looking for anybody's approbation." Levin has found his "larger purpose"; so, no doubt, have his colleagues—Pittman, Parsons, and, above all, Case, the chairman. What remains to be seen is whether their purposes—and AOL Time Warner's corporate goals—really correspond with society's best interests. ♦

# THREE JOURNEYS

*Anton Chekhov on the road.*

BY JANET MALCOLM

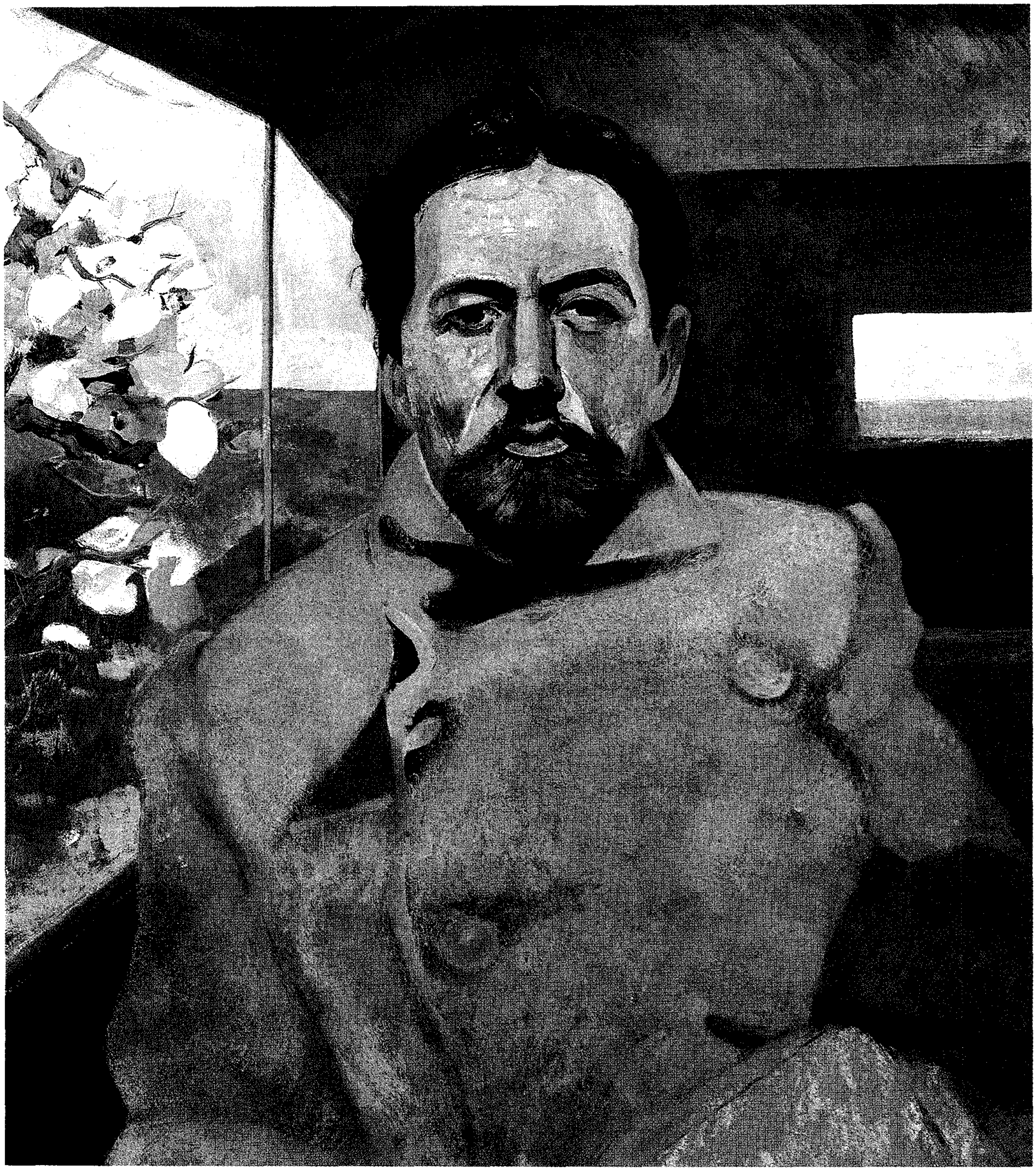
In the winter of 1897, when the consumptive Anton Chekhov was living in Nice on doctor's orders, he was asked by a Russian editor to write a story "on a subject taken from life abroad." Chekhov declined, explaining, "I am able to write only from memory, I never write directly from observed life. I must let the subject filter through my memory, until only what is important and typical in it remains in the filter." But one of Chekhov's works—"The Island of Sakhalin" (1895), a book reporting on a three-month visit to the prison colony of Sakhalin—forms an exception to the rule. It was written not from memory but from file cards and scholarly books and reports, and conceived as a work of social and natural science rather than as a literary text. (Chekhov even briefly considered submitting it to Moscow University's medical school as a dissertation attesting to his qualifications to teach there.) Not surprisingly, therefore, "The Island of Sakhalin" is a worthy and often interesting work, but rarely a moving one, and never a brilliant one. It appears that even Chekhov, when writing as an academic, doesn't write like Chekhov.

His customary artist's fearlessness gives way to a kind of humility, almost a servility, before the ideal of objectivity and the protocols of scientific methodology. Like a convict chained to a wheelbarrow (one of the punishments at Sakhalin), he drags along the burden of his demographic, geographic, agricultural, ethnographic, zoological, and botanical facts. He cannot omit anything; his narrative line is constantly being derailed by his data. In an autobiographical note that he wrote for a reunion of his medical-school class, Chekhov registered his awareness that "the principles of creative art do not always admit of full accord with scientific data; death by poison cannot be represented on stage as it actually happens." In the Sakhalin book, the conflict between science and art is almost always resolved in science's favor. Chekhov tells it like it is, and allows his narrative to go where his mountain of information pushes it, which is all over the place, and ultimately nowhere. Chekhov's horror at the harshness and squalor of life in the colony, his contempt for the stupidity and callousness of the administration, and his pity for the convicts and settlers sometimes do break through the posture of scientific detachment. But, in rendering the sufferings on this island of the damned, Chekhov could not achieve in three hundred pages what he achieved in a four-page passage at the end of his story "The Murder" (1895), about Sakhalin convicts in fetters waiting to load coal onto a steamer on a stormy night.

If the trip to Sakhalin did not yield a work of literary distinction, its personal (and eventual literary) significance for Chekhov was momentous. He needed to go on a journey. In a letter to his publisher and great friend Alexei Suvorin, written on May 4, 1889, from a rented dacha in the Ukraine, he wrote, "There is a sort of stagnation in my soul. I explain it by the stagnation in my personal life. I am not disappointed, I am not tired, I am not depressed, but simply everything has suddenly become less interesting. I must do something to rouse myself." It is impossible to know, of course, what Chekhov meant by the stagnation in his personal life, but it seems likely that his malaise was connected to the final illness (tuberculosis) of his brother Nikolai, whom he had been nursing since March, first in Moscow and then at the dacha. The letter of May 4th characteristically makes no mention of the rigors of the death watch, but three glancing references to Nikolai tell the story of Chekhov's sense of stuckness: "I'm in a good mood, and if it weren't for the coughing painter and the mosquitoes—even Elpe's formula is no protection against them—I'd be a perfect Potyomkin," and, later, "Bring me some banned books and newspapers from abroad. If it weren't for the painter, I'd go with you," and, a few lines down, "Lensky"—an actor in the Maly Theatre—"has invited me to accompany him on tour to Tiflis. I'd go if not for the painter, who's not doing any too brilliantly." Nikolai died on June 17th, and in September Chekhov completed his powerful and long "A Dreary Story," about an eminent professor who comes to the end of his life and finds it frighteningly meaningless; he realizes that he lacks a ruling idea with which to make sense of his existence. The atmosphere of the work is like a taste of tin in the mouth, the fatigue behind the eyes produced by something unbearable. That it was written by a man in mourning is not surprising; perhaps only a man in mourning could have written a tale of such sour painfulness. The Chekhov biographer Ernest Simmons speculates that Nikolai's death from tuberculosis forced Chekhov to confront the probability of his own death from the disease and, further, that "A Dreary Story" reflects Chekhov's own need for a ruling idea. On October 4, 1888, in a much quoted letter, Chekhov had written of his independence of any such need:

> I am not a liberal, not a conservative, not a believer in gradual progress, not a monk, not an indifferentist. I should like to be a free artist and nothing more, and I regret that God has not given me the power to be one. I hate lying and violence in all their forms. . . . I regard trade-marks and labels as a superstition. My holy of holies is the human body, health, intelligence, talent, inspiration, love, and the most absolute freedom—freedom from violence and lying, whatever form they may take. This is the program I would follow if I were a great artist.

A year later, Chekhov was no longer so comfortable with his artist's freedom. At the end of 1889, he abruptly dropped literature and began to make prepara-



*"I'm ending up with something rather odd and much too original," Chekhov said of his story "The Steppe."*

RICCARDO VECCHIO

tions for the six-thousand-mile journey to Sakhalin, at the easternmost end of the continent. In letters to his baffled friends, Chekhov gives various high-minded reasons for making the trip—to fulfill his debt to science, to rouse the conscience of an indifferent public—but the explanation that has the greatest ring of truth is the one he gave to his friend Ivan Shcheglov in a letter of March 22, 1890: "I am not going for the sake of impressions or observations, but simply for the sake of living for six months differently from how I have lived hitherto."

The letters Chekhov wrote during the two-and-a-half-month journey are some of the best he has left us. They permit us to see, as if in a movie with a large budget for special effects, the hardships he endured as he made his way across the continent, first by train and riverboat, and then (for the largest part of the trip—nearly three thousand miles) by frail open horse-drawn vehicles on rutted and sometimes washed-out roads. (The Trans-Siberian Railroad did not yet exist.) He travelled, day and night, in frigidly cold weather and endless spells of rain. He suffered from hunger and

*"I knew it wouldn't last—but I never dreamed it wouldn't last this long."*

• •

cold and painful shoes. Before he became accustomed to it, the jogging and lurching of the open carriage made his bones ache. For a consumptive to undertake such a trip would seem like a form of suicide. But, strangely, Chekhov didn't sicken; on the contrary, he thrived. As the journey progressed, he stopped coughing and spitting blood, and started feeling really well (even his chronic hemorrhoids subsided). In their book "The White Plague: Tuberculosis, Man, and Society," René and Jean Dubos devote a chapter to some of the odder forms of therapy that were thought up during the premodern period of tuberculosis. One of these was the horseback-riding cure, popular in the eighteenth century. They cite several cases of patients (one of them John Locke's nephew) who recovered from tuberculosis after strenuous daily riding, and note a Dutch physician's recommendation that consumptives "of the lower classes who were confined to sedentary occupations endeavor to find employment as coachmen." They go on to write of a cobbler who did become a coachman. "He was well as long as he remained in the saddle but lost his health when he returned to cobbling." Chekhov remained well until he returned to Moscow, in the fall of 1890, when his poor health promptly returned. ("It's a strange business," he wrote to Suvorin on December 24th. "While I was travelling to Sakhalin and back I felt perfectly well, but now, at home, the devil knows what is happening to me. My head is continually aching, I have a feeling of languor all over, I am quickly exhausted, apathetic, and, worst of all, my heart is not beating regularly.")

In his letters during the trip, he exulted over his endurance. On June 5th, during a stopover in the Siberian town of Irkutsk, where he slept in a real bed and had a bath ("The soapsuds off my head were not white but of an ashen brown color, as though I were washing a horse"), he wrote to the editor N. A. Leikin:

> From Tomsk to Krasnoyarsk was a desperate struggle through impassable mud. My goodness, it frightens me to think of it! How often I had to mend my chaise, to walk, to swear, to get out of my chaise and get into it again, and so on! It sometimes happened that I was from six to ten hours getting from one station to another, and every time the chaise had to be mended it took from ten to fifteen hours. . . . Add to all that hunger, dust in one's nose, one's eyes glued together with sleep, the continual dread that something would get broken in the chaise. . . . Nevertheless I am well content, and I thank God that He has given me the strength and opportunity to make this journey. I have seen and experienced a great deal, and it has all been very new and interesting to me not as a literary man, but as a human being. The Yenissey, the Taiga, the stations, the drivers, the wild scenery, the wild life, the physical agonies caused by the discomforts of the journey, the enjoyment I got from rest—all taken together is so delightful that I can't describe it.

On June 20th, Chekhov exulted again to Leikin from a ship on the Amur River:

> I have driven with horses more than four thousand versts. My journey was entirely successful. I was in good health all the time, and lost nothing of my luggage but a penknife. I can wish no one a better journey. The journey is absolutely free from danger, and all the tales of escaped convicts, of night attacks, and so on are nothing but legends, traditions of the remote past. A revolver is an entirely superfluous article. Now I am sitting in a first-class cabin, and feel as though I were in Europe. I feel in the mood one is in after passing an examination.

Chekhov arrived at Sakhalin on July 11th, and remained there for three months, travelling all over the island and using the device of a census to gain entrance into prisons and settlers' huts. (Simmons theorizes that the project of a scientific investigation of the colony was itself an after-the-fact rationale to justify his journey to his friends—and to himself.) Chekhov set about his work with characteristic energy and zeal. He managed to interview thousands of people; along with the convicts and settlers, he interviewed the indigenous Gilyaks and Ainus. By October, he was more than ready to leave.

Back in Moscow in December (he made the return journey by ship from Vladivostok—through Hong Kong, Ceylon, India, Egypt, and Turkey—to Odessa), he wrote to Suvorin, "I know a very great deal now, but I have brought away a horrid feeling. While I was staying in Sakhalin, I only had a bitter feeling in my inside as though from rancid butter; and now, as I remember it, Sakhalin seems to me a perfect hell. For two months I worked intensely, putting my back into it; in the third month I began to feel ill from the bitterness I have spoken of, from boredom, and the thought that the cholera would come from Vladivostok to Sakhalin, and that I was in danger of having to winter in the convict settlement." But a week later he wrote to Suvorin, "How wrong you were when you advised me not to go to Sakhalin! . . . What a sour creature I would be now if I had sat at home. Before my journey 'The Kreutzer Sonata' seemed to me to be an event, but now it seems to me absurd and ridiculous. Either I've grown up because of my journey or I have gone crazy—the devil knows which."

On the eve of Chekhov's heroic journey, a complication had arisen that almost ruined it. An artist named N., "a nice but tedious man," wanted to travel with him. Chekhov enlisted Suvorin's aid, writing, "To refuse him my company I haven't the courage, but to travel with him would be simple misery." Chekhov went on, "Be my benefactor, tell N. that I am a drunkard, a swindler, a nihilist, a rowdy character, and that it is out of the question to travel with me, and that a journey in my company will do nothing but upset him."

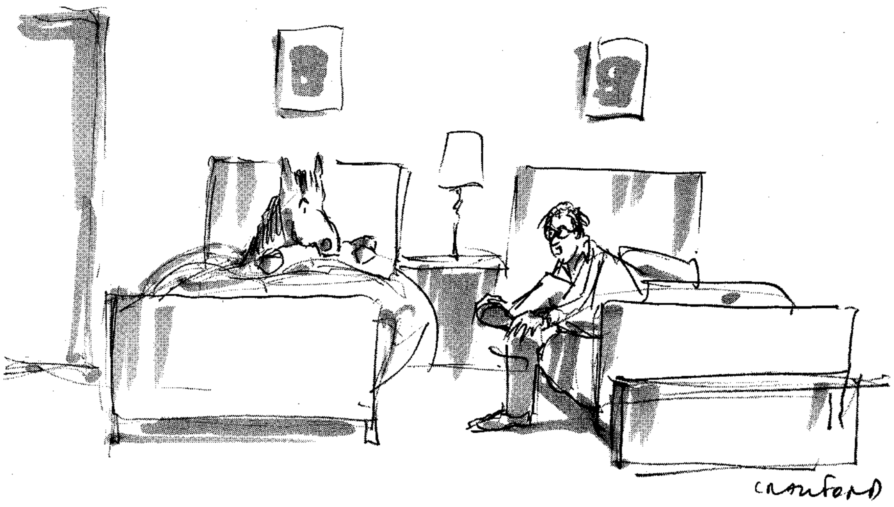
"When one is travelling one absolutely must be alone," Chekhov wrote to his sister, Maria, on June 13th, concluding his complaints about a trio of travelling companions—an Army doctor and two lieutenants—he had picked up somewhere along the way and now wished to shed. He had begun to complain about the trio in a previous letter to Maria (June 7th): "I like silence better than anything on the journey, and my companions talk and sing without stopping, and they talk of nothing but women." Chekhov finally shed the officers by travelling first class on the Amur River steamer, where they had booked second class. That he had picked them up in the first place is consistent with his lifelong inconsistency in regard to solitude. (On the boat, he actually sought out the officers and had tea with them.) He liked silence, but he also didn't like it. He complained about trying to write in a room where someone was banging on the piano, a baby was crying, and someone else was asking his advice about a medical matter; but when the house was silent he would ask his brother to play the piano. He complained about the number of guests at his country house, Melikhovo, but also said he couldn't live without guests. ("When I'm alone, for some reason I become terrified, just as though I were alone in a frail little boat on a great ocean," he wrote to Suvorin in June, 1889.) At the end of his life, when he felt stuck in Yalta, as he had felt stuck with the dying Nikolai, he complained about the crowd of visitors he had—and about his feeling of isolation. He was a restless man, perhaps because he understood too well what rest represented. "Life is only given us once, and one wants to live it boldly, with full consciousness and beauty," the consumptive narrator of "An Anonymous Story" (1893) says. Chekhov lived only forty-four years, and during the last third of his life he was surely conscious of the likelihood of a premature death. Those of us who do not live under such a distinctly stated sentence of death cannot know what it is like. Chekhov's masterpieces are always obliquely telling us.

Chekhov's decision to write a book of nonfiction about his journey to Sakhalin, instead of allowing the trip to develop into fiction in his interior darkroom, may have been influenced by the fact that he had already written a masterpiece of fiction about a journey. This was the long story "The Steppe" (1888), the first Chekhov story to appear in a literary journal (as opposed to a newspaper), and the work that catapulted him into the ranks of major Russian writers. The story chronicles a summer journey across the steppe of a nine-year-old boy named Yegorushka, accompanying his merchant uncle, Ivan Ivanitch Kuzmitchov, and an old priest, Father Christopher Sireysky, who are taking a convoy of wagons filled with wool to a distant town, where the wool will be sold and the boy put in school. Along the way, they search for a mysterious, powerful entrepreneur of the steppe named Varlamov, on whom the sale of the wool obscurely depends. "I describe the plain, its lilac vistas, the sheep breeders, the Jews, the priests, the nocturnal storms, the inns, the wagon trains, the steppe birds and so on," Chekhov said in a letter to the writer Dmitri Grigorovich on January 12, 1888, while composing the story. But he was nervous about it:

> I'm ending up with something rather odd and much too original. Since I'm not used to writing anything long and am constantly, as is my wont, afraid of writing too much, I've gone to the other extreme. All the pages come out compact, as if they had been condensed, and impressions keep crowding each other, piling up, and pushing one another out of the way. The short scenes . . . are squeezed tightly together; they move in an unbroken chain and are therefore fatiguing. Instead of a scene, I end up with a dry, detailed list of impressions, very much like an outline; instead of an artistically integrated depiction of the steppe, I offer the reader an encyclopedia of the steppe.

Chekhov sounds as if he could not quite come to terms with his own originality. He is like a resistant reader of an avant-garde work. The compression about which he frets is, of course, the compression that is the signature of his mature work. The writing that is "very much like an outline" is prose as pared down—and as charged—as poetry.

Early in "The Steppe" (subtitled "The Story of a Journey"), Chekhov draws a crucial contrast—one that will hover over the story—between the merchant and the priest as travellers. Kuzmitchov is like the businessmen one sees today on planes and trains working on laptops and talking on cell phones. He is oblivious of his surroundings. He only wants to get there. "Fanatically devoted to his work, Kuzmitchov always, even in his sleep and at church when they were singing 'Like the cherubim,' thought about his business and could never forget it for a moment; and now"— the men are taking a nap—"he was probably dreaming about bales of wool, wagons, prices, Varlamov." Father Christopher, in contrast,



*"Well, I finally saw a shrink today."*

> had never all his life been conscious of anything which could, like a boa-constrictor, coil about his soul and hold it tight. In all the numerous enterprises he had undertaken in his day what attracted him was not so much the business itself, but the bustle and the contact with other people involved in every undertaking. Thus, in the present expedition, he was not so much interested in wool, in Varlamov, and in prices, as in the long journey, the conversations on the way, the sleeping under a chaise, and the meals at odd times. . . . He must have been dreaming of . . . all sorts of things that Kuzmitchov could not possibly dream of.

## PRAYER

Approaching ninety, and still with a hope
That I could tell it, say it, blurt it out.

If not before people, at least before You,
Who nourished me with honey and wormwood.

I am ashamed, for I must believe You protected me,
As if I had for You some particular merit.

I was like those in the gulags who fashioned a cross from twigs
And prayed to it at night in the barracks.

I made a plea and You deigned to answer it,
So that I could see how unreasonable it was.

But when out of pity for others I begged a miracle,
The sky and the earth were silent, as always.

Morally suspect because of my belief in You,
I admired unbelievers for their simple persistence.

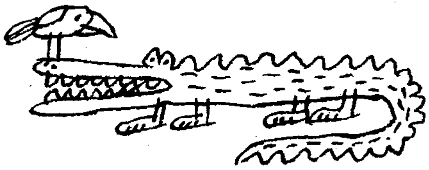
How should one live? Like a Kuzmitchov or a Father Christopher? The story is borne like a canopy on these two poles of possibility. Kuzmitchov is desperate to find Varlamov, who has always just left the place at which the travellers have arrived. He searches for him the way we search in dreams for someone we will never find. Father Christopher is calm: "A man isn't a needle—we shall find him." As Kuzmitchov looks at him "almost with hatred," the priest faces east and for a quarter of an hour Kuzmitchov must wait while he recites his psalms for the day. The quest for Varlamov threads its way through the pages of "The Steppe" with a similar lack of urgency, as though Chekhov were reluctant to allow a conventional plot device to coil about his narrative. But when Varlamov finally comes into view—a short, gray older man on a small horse, showing his displeasure to a subordinate who has not followed orders—he is a figure of electrifying authority. "It's people like that the earth rests upon," a peasant says of him. Varlamov's face has

> the same expression of businesslike coldness as Ivan Ivanitch's face, the same look of fanatical zeal for business. But yet what a difference could be felt between him and Kuzmitchov! Uncle Ivan Ivanitch always had on his face, together with his business-like reserve, a look of anxiety and apprehension that he would not find Varlamov, that he would be late, that he would miss a good price; nothing of that sort, so characteristic of small and dependent persons, could be seen in the face or figure of Varlamov. This man made the price himself, was not looking for anyone, and did not depend on anyone; however ordinary his exterior, yet in everything, even in the manner of holding his whip, there was a sense of power and habitual authority over the steppe.

You will have noted the word "Uncle." It is Yegorushka who has been observing Varlamov and whose thoughts Chekhov records. The consciousness of the boy—who is not yet either a Kuzmitchov or a Father Christopher, but possesses both the former's hysterical anxiety and the latter's capacity for pleasure—is the lens through which most of the events of "The Steppe" are seen. (Chekhov reserves portions of the text for an omniscient narrator.) It might seem that Chekhov has overstepped the bounds of plausibility in endowing a nine-year-old child with such astuteness and such complexity of thought. But, on rereading the passage, we see that Chekhov has made no misstep. While a nine-year-old could not write the passage or speak it in those words, he could think it. Chekhov intercepts his thought but does no violence to it as he turns it into prose. His acute sensitivity to the difference between unexpressed and expressed thought guides him in his risky feat. Two of Yegorushka's other interior monologues reveal more about Chekhov's poetics. The first takes place at the beginning of the story, as the chaise bearing the boy and the merchant and the priest drives out of their village past a cemetery where, amid the white crosses and tombstones, cherry trees grow:

> Yegorushka remembered that when the cherries were in blossom those white patches melted with the flowers into a sea of white; and that when the cherries were ripe the white tombstones and crosses were dotted with splashes of red like bloodstains. Under the cherry trees in the cemetery Yegorushka's father and granny, Zinaida Danilovna, lay sleeping day and night. When Granny had died she had been put in a long narrow coffin and two pennies had been put upon her eyes, which would not keep shut. Up to the time of her death, she had been brisk, and used to bring soft rolls covered with poppy seeds from the market. Now she did nothing but sleep and sleep.

Here—perhaps because he has only just introduced Yegorushka—Chekhov points up the naïveté of his interior monologist. Later, he will not feel the need to remind us so insistently that we are in the mind of a child. But again he performs the tour de force of endowing the boy with thought exceeding his expressive capacities, while never going outside the repertoire of what a child can imagine and feel.



The second example is one of the strangest passages in literature. Chekhov may well have been thinking of it when he worried that "The Steppe" was "much too original." The journey

What sort of adorer of Majesty am I,
If I consider religion good only for the weak like myself?

The least normal person in Father Chomski's class,
I had already fixed my sights on the swirling vortex of a destiny.

Now You are closing down my five senses, slowly,
And I am an old man lying in darkness.

Delivered to that thing which has oppressed me
So that I always ran forward, composing my poems.

Liberate me from guilt, real and imagined.
Give me certainty that I toiled for Your glory.

In the hour of the agony of death, help me with Your suffering
Which cannot save the world from pain.

—*Czeslaw Milosz*

(*Translated, from the Polish, by the author and Robert Hass.*)

takes place during a time of extreme heat and drought. The travellers have stopped to eat and rest, and while the men are napping the hot and bored boy tries to amuse himself. Suddenly, in the distance, he hears a woman singing a song that is "subdued, dreary and melancholy, like a dirge, and hardly audible."

> Yegorushka looked about him, and could not make out where the strange song came from. Then, as he listened, he began to fancy that the grass was singing; in its song, withered and half-dead, it was without words, but plaintively and passionately urging that it was not to blame, that the sun was burning it for no fault of its own; it urged that it ardently longed to live, that it was young and might have been beautiful but for the heat and the drought; it was guiltless, but yet it prayed forgiveness and protested that it was in anguish, sad and sorry for itself.

There is a kind of anthropomorphism within anthropomorphism here. As the writer attributes words to the boy that the boy would not utter, the boy attributes thoughts to the grass that the grass could not "think." In rendering the boy's excruciating empathy with the grass, it is almost as if Chekhov were mimicking his own act of sympathetic imagination. Echoes of another "much too original" text—the Book of Isaiah, with its images of landscapes cruelly withered by God to teach his stiff-necked people not to cross him and its analogizing of the life of man to the life of grass—may be heard in the passage. We do not know whether Chekhov was intentionally (or even unconsciously) evoking Isaiah, but when the Kuzmitchov party meets a barefoot old shepherd with a loincloth and a crook—"a regular figure from the Old Testament"—or stops at an inn owned by an obsequious Jew named Moisey (Moses), or encounters water coming out of rock, we can hardly avoid the thought that the journey is some kind of latter-day Exodus. The storm that is the real climax of the work seems like one of the more showy magical stunts of the Old Testament deity. It begins with a casual display of power—"Someone seemed to strike a match in the sky; a pale phosphorescent streak gleamed and went out"—and mounts to awe-inspiring extremes of violence. The boy, atop one of the wool wagons, is exposed to the storm's fearful wind, rain, lightning, and thunder, and becomes ill with chills and fever; he recovers after the priest rubs (anoints) him with oil and vinegar.

The boy is a rather characterless character, a kind of generic child, expressing the passivity and sadness of childhood, and recording impressions in something of the way a camera does. (The melancholy of photography has been noted by several of its practitioners.) When he is at the inn of the obsequious Moisey, he notes its gloominess and ugliness and the "disgusting smell of kerosene and rotten apples" which permeates it. But then he has an unexpected brush with beauty. He is lying half asleep on a sofa when a beautiful young noblewoman, dressed in black and sending forth "a glorious scent," appears and kisses him on the cheeks. She is the Polish Countess Dranitsky, a rich local landowner, about whose semi-annual balls (at which tea is made in silver samovars, and strawberries and raspberries are served in winter) the boy had already heard at home, and about whom he will now entertain pleasurable fantasies. She, too, is looking for Varlamov (neither the boy nor we ever learn why). When the boy first sees her, the image of a graceful poplar he had seen standing alone on the steppe comes into his mind "for some reason." The reason is clear enough. The Countess, too, stands alone in the story—its only aristocrat and an emblem of the culture and gentility that the boy's mother is sending him away from home to acquire. The boy has also heard about the extraordinary table clock in the Countess's drawing room: a golden rider on a rearing golden horse with diamond eyes brandishes his sword to right and left as the clock strikes. When we meet Varlamov, he rides a small non-rearing horse and brandishes a whip. He is the self-made New Man whom we will meet again in Chekhov's writings, most memorably as Lopahin in "The Cherry Orchard." Neither is unsympathetic; Chekhov had no illusions about the days of rearing golden horses and riders with slashing swords. Another typical character is Dymov, one of the drivers of the wool wagons, an obnoxious young bully, under whose provocation Yegorushka's passivity gives way to fury and loathing. Dymov is a relatively mild version of the helplessly violent man we will meet in later works—Solyony in "Three Sisters," and Matvey Savitch in "Peasant Wives," for the two worst examples—and for whom Chekhov retained a child's pure hatred. A character who has no successors, who is a kind of flash of unrepeatable inspiration, is a driver named Vassya, who has been horrifyingly mutilated by his earlier work in a match factory—his jaw is being eaten away—but who has a remarkable and wonderful power:

> His sight was extraordinarily keen. . . . He was so long-sighted that the brown steppe was for him always full of life and interest. He had only to look into the distance to see a fox, a hare, a bustard, or some other animal keeping a distance from men. There was nothing strange in seeing a hare running away or a flying bustard—everyone crossing the steppes could see them; but it was not vouchsafed to everyone to see wild animals in their own haunts when they were not running nor hiding, nor looking about them in alarm. Yet Vassya saw foxes playing, hares washing themselves with their paws, bustards preening their wings and hammering out their hollow nests. Thanks to this keenness of sight, Vassya had, besides the world seen by everyone, another world of his own, accessible to no one else, and probably a very beautiful one, for when he saw something and was in raptures over it it was impossible not to envy him.

"There are many places that will be understood by neither critics nor the public; they will seem trifling to both, not meriting attention, but I anticipate with pleasure the two or three literary epicureans who will understand and value these same places, and that is enough for me," Chekhov wrote to Y. P. Polonsky in February, 1888, in another of the defensive letters he felt impelled to write to friends while working on the most ambitious project he had yet undertaken. In an essay entitled "Chekhov's 'Steppe': A Metapoetic Journey" (which appears in "Anton Chekhov Rediscovered," edited by Savely Senderovich and Munir Sendich; 1987), a literary epicurean named Michael Finke fulfills Chekhov's expectations of being understood with an almost Vassya-like perspicacity. He sees what no previous critic has seen—motifs and allusions tucked into "places" of no apparent significance (such as the floor of a shop marked with kabbalistic symbols or two peculiar pictures on the wall of the reception room in Moisey's inn)—and his essay permanently changes our view of the story as an inspired but inchoate effort, written before Chekhov was in full possession of his artistic powers. Conventional criticism of "The Steppe" has taken Chekhov's self-criticism at face value (almost always a mistake), and missed the figure in the carpet that Finke's reading reveals. The story, as it appears under Finke's high-powered lens, proves to be a work of breathtaking artistic unity. Details that seemed random and incoherent fall into place as elements of an intricate design—but one so cleverly hidden it is small wonder that no one saw it for a hundred years. "If a story is to seem at all original," Finke writes, "its order must somehow be disguised, known only in retrospect, and those laws of necessity governing the function of detail must be masked." "The Steppe," as Finke suggests, is "a sort of dictionary of Chekhov's poetics," a kind of sample case of the concealed literary weapons Chekhov would deploy in his work to come.

In the short story "The Schoolmistress," written nine years later, we see how the compression that made Chekhov so uneasy in 1888 was now his modus operandi. It is another emblematic story of a journey, but this one is the mere return day trip of a spinster schoolteacher, Marya Vassilyevna, from the town where she goes to get her monthly salary. The teacher is one of the pathetic drudges who (as Chekhov learned at Melikhovo) taught in Russia's district schools in the nineteenth century (and may still do so in the twenty-first). The life of a schoolteacher

> is a hard-working, an uninteresting life, and only silent, patient cart-horses like Marya Vassilyevna could put up with it for long; the lively, nervous, impressionable people who talked about a vocation and serving the idea were soon weary of it and gave up the work.

Marya Vassilyevna is travelling in a horse-drawn cart, driven by an old coachman named Semyon. It is April, with traces of winter, "dark, long, and spiteful," still on the ground, but with delicious signs of spring in the air—to which, however, Marya Vassilyevna is impervious. She has taken this trip monthly for thirteen years, and "whether it were spring as now, or a rainy autumn evening, or winter, it was all the same to her." Like Kuzmitchov obsessively thinking about wool and prices and Varlamov, Marya obsessively thinks about the examinations she must prepare her students for, about the brutality of the school watchman, about the indifference of zemstvo officials, about the difficulty of obtaining firewood for the schoolroom. Chekhov pauses to tell us that Marya Vassilyevna was orphaned at ten, and can remember almost nothing of her early life, in a large flat in Moscow, near the Red Gate. Then he gives us an unforgettable image: Marya's one relic from her childhood is a photograph of her mother, but it has faded so badly that nothing remains visible but the hair and the eyebrows. We feel we have seen such photographs, but have never before thought of them as metaphors for fading memory.

As the teacher and the coachman travel through an increasingly mired terrain, they meet a landowner named Hanov, driving a carriage with four horses. Marya Vassilyevna is acquainted with Hanov, and so are we: he is our old friend the "good man who cannot make good," as Vladimir Nabokov called him, cousin to Ivanov, Laevsky, Astrov, Vershinin. In this version, he is

> a man of forty with a listless expression and a face that showed signs of wear, who was beginning to look old, but was still handsome and admired by women. He lived in his big homestead alone, and was not in the service; and people used to say of him that he did nothing at home but walk up and down the room whistling, or play chess with his old footman. People said, too, that he drank heavily.

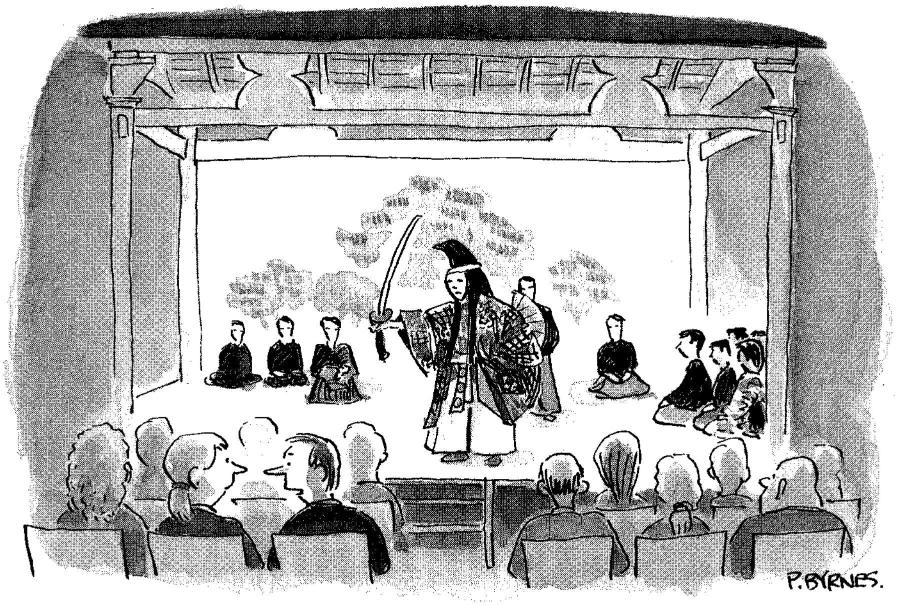
After greeting Hanov, the schoolteacher goes back to her obsessions. But the thought floats into her mind that Hanov is attractive. When the road grows so muddy that Semyon and Hanov have to get down and lead their horses, she watches Hanov and thinks, "In his walk there was something just perceptible that betrayed in him a being already touched by decay, weak, and on the road to ruin." She gets a whiff of alcohol, and goes on to feel "dread and pity for this man going to his ruin for no visible cause or reason, and it came into her mind that if she had been his wife or sister she would have devoted her whole life to saving him from ruin." She pursues the fantasy, and quickly dismisses it:

> The mere thought that he and she might be close to one another and equals seemed impossible and absurd. In reality, life was arranged and human relations were complicated so utterly beyond all understanding that when one thought about it one felt uncanny, and one's heart sank.
>
> "And it is beyond all understanding," she

> thought, “why God gives beauty, this graciousness, and sad, sweet eyes to weak, unlucky, useless people—why they are so charming.”

Hanov turns off, and Marya’s obsessions once again take over her thoughts. Her bare life, Chekhov notes, “was making her grow old and coarse, making her ugly, angular, and awkward, as though she were made of lead. . . . No one thought her attractive, and life was passing drearily, without affection, without friendly sympathy, without interesting acquaintances.” The journey itself is as vexing as the life:

> Semyon kept picking out the driest and shortest way, first by a meadow, then by the backs of the village huts; but in one place the peasants would not let them pass, in another it was the priest’s land and they could not cross it, in another, Ivan Ionov had bought a plot from the landowner and had dug a ditch round it. They kept having to turn back.



*“What part of Noh don’t you understand?”*

Eventually, they stop at a rough tavern; outside, wagons filled with large bottles of crude sulfuric acid stand on ground covered with snow and dung. The peasants drinking within show small respect for the schoolteacher. She is practically one of them. On the last leg of the journey the travellers have to cross a river. Semyon chooses to go through the water rather than over a bridge a few miles away. When they enter the river, the horse goes in up to his belly, and Marya’s skirt and sleeve get soaked, and so do the sugar and flour she bought in town. On the other side, at a railway crossing, they find the barrier down. The schoolmistress gets out of the cart and stands shivering on the ground. The end of the story is less than a page away. Chekhov writes:

> [The village] was in sight now, and the school with the green roof, and the church with its crosses flashing in the evening sun: and the station windows flashed too, and a pink smoke rose from the engine . . . and it seemed to her that everything was trembling with cold.
>
> Here was the train; the windows reflected the gleaming light like the crosses on the church: it made her eyes ache to look at them. On the little platform between two first-class carriages a lady was standing, and Marya Vassilyevna glanced at her as she passed. Her mother! What a resemblance! Her mother had had just such luxuriant hair, just such a brow and bend of the head. And with amazing distinctness, for the first time in those thirteen years, there rose before her mind a vivid picture of her mother, her father, her brother, their flat in Moscow, the aquarium with little fish, everything to the tiniest detail; she heard the sound of the piano, her father’s voice; she felt as she had been then, young, good-looking, well-dressed, in a bright warm room among her own people. A feeling of joy and happiness suddenly came over her, she pressed her hands to her temples in an ecstasy, and called softly, beseechingly:
>
> “Mother!”

At this moment, Hanov and his carriage arrive at the crossing, “and seeing him she imagined happiness such as she had never had, and smiled and nodded to him as an equal and a friend, and it seemed to her that her happiness, her triumph, was glowing in the sky and on all sides, in the windows and on the trees. Her father and mother had never died, she had never been a schoolmistress, it was a long, tedious, strange dream, and now she had awakened. ”

The vision abruptly vanishes, like the sun going down in winter. Marya gets back into the cart and proceeds to the village and to her dismal life. The long, tedious, strange dream goes on.

The previous year, Chekhov had written “Uncle Vanya.” (Or probably had; he was extremely secretive about its composition, perhaps because of its relationship to “The Wood Demon,” a bizarrely poor play he wrote in 1889 and wished to disown but from which “Uncle Vanya” unquestionably derives.) The schoolmistress’s brief fantasy about marriage to the handsome, depressed, alcoholic Hanov is a kind of shorthand version of Sonya’s deep, hopeless love for the handsome, depressed, alcoholic Astrov. At the end of the play, after the professor and Yelena and Astrov have gone and Sonya and Vanya are left to live out their lives as “silent, patient carthorses,” Sonya, too, has an ecstatic vision. She has abandoned hope of earthly happiness, but imagines an afterlife “that is bright, lovely, beautiful. We shall rejoice and look back at these troubles of ours with tenderness, with a smile—and we shall rest. I have faith, Uncle; I have fervent, passionate faith.” We do not know whether Marya Vassilyevna has faith, but the church, with its crosses flashing in the setting sunlight, is the fulcrum of her ecstasy. (Chekhov used this image in several other stories, including “Three Years” and “Lights.”) A close reading of “The Schoolmistress” would also take note of Marya’s baptism in the river and of the fish in the Moscow apartment. As always, Chekhov’s allusions to religion are inconclusive. They mark important moments, but they are written in pencil. As always, and unlike Tolstoy, Chekhov leaves the question of what it all means unanswered. He raises it, but then—as if remembering that he is a man of science and a rationalist—seems to shrug and walk out of the room. ♦

FICTION

# A BIT ON THE SIDE

### BY WILLIAM TREVOR

In the Japanese café, he helped her off with her coat and took it to the line of hooks beneath the sign that absolved the management of responsibility for its safety. They weren't the first in the café, although it was early, ten past eight. The taxi-driver who came in most mornings was reading the *Daily Mail* in his usual corner. Two of the music students had arrived.

He hung up the coat, which still carried a faint trace of scent. Lightweight and black, with a showerproof finish, it was protection enough today, since the forecast they'd both heard—she in her kitchen an hour ago, he while he shaved in Dollis Hill—confidently predicted that the fine weather was here for another few days. He hadn't brought a coat himself and he didn't wear a hat in summer.

From the table they always sat at—side by side, so that they could see the street where the office workers were beginning to hurry by—she watched him patting a pocket of his jacket, making sure his cigarettes and lighter were there. Something was different this morning; on the walk from Chiltern Street she had sensed, for an instant only, that their love affair was not as it had been yesterday. Almost always they met in Chiltern Street, their two journeys converging there. Neither ever waited: when one or the other was late, they made do with meeting in the café.

"All right?" she asked. "All right?" She kept anxiety out of her tone; no need for it, why should there be? She knew about the touchiness of love: almost always, it was misplaced.

"Absolutely," he said, and then their coffee came, his single croissant with it, the Japanese waitress smiling. "Absolutely," he repeated, breaking his croissant in half.

Another of the music students arrived, the one with the clarinet case. Then a couple from the hotel in George Street came in, Americans, who sat beneath the picture of the sea wave, whose voices—ordering scrambled eggs and ham—placed them geographically. The hotel's visitors often liked to breakfast here.

The lovers who had met in Chiltern Street were uneasy, in spite of efforts made by both of them. Discomfiture had flickered in his features when he'd been asked if everything was all right. She hadn't been convinced by his reassurance, and within minutes her own attempt to reassure herself hadn't made much sense: this, in turn, she kept hidden.

She reached out to flick a flake of croissant from his chin. It was the kind of thing they did, he turning up the collar of her coat when it was wrong, she straightening his tie. Small gestures made, their way of possessing each other in the moments they made their own, not that they ever said.

"I just thought—" she began to say, and watched him shake his head.

"How good you look!" he murmured softly. He stroked the back of her hand with his fingertips, which he often did, just once, the same brief gesture.

"I miss you all the time," she said.

She was thirty-nine, he in his mid-forties. Their relationship had begun as an office romance, before computers and their software filched a living from her. She had moved on of necessity, he of necessity had remained: he had a family to support in Dollis Hill. These days they met as they had this morning, again at lunchtime in the Paddington Street Gardens or the picture gallery where surreptitiously they ate their sandwiches when it was wet, again at twenty to six in the Running Footman.

He was a man who should have been, in how he dressed, untidy. His easy, lazily expansive gestures, his rugged, often sunburnt features, his fair hair stubborn in its disregard of his intentions, the weight he was inclined to put on, all suggested a nature that would resist sartorial demands.

In fact, he was always quite dressily turned out, this morning in pale lightweight trousers and jacket, blue Eton shirt, his tie striped blue and red. It was a contradiction in him she had always found attractive.

She herself, today, besides the black of her showerproof coat, wore blue and green, the colors repeated in the flimsy silk of her scarf. Her smooth black hair was touched with gray, which she made no attempt to disguise, preferring to make the most of what the approach of middle age allowed. She would have been horrified if she'd put on as much as an ounce; she saw to it that she didn't. Eyes, nose, mouth, cheeks, unblemished neck: no single feature stood out, their combination necessary in the spare simplicity of her beauty. Good earrings—no more than dots, and never absent—were an emphasis that completed what was already there.

"Have your cigarette," she said.

He slipped the cellophane from a packet of Marlboros. They talked about the day, predicting what it would bring. She was secretary to a businessman, the managing director of a firm that imported fashion clothes, he an accountant. A consignment of Italian trouser suits had failed to reach the depot in Shoreditch, had still been missing the evening before. She spoke of that; he of a man called Bannister, in the patio business, who had been underdeclaring his profits, which meant he would have to be dismissed as a client. He had been written to yesterday: this morning there'd be an outraged telephone call in response.

The taxi-driver left the café, since it was almost half past eight now and the first of the traffic wardens would be coming on. From where they sat, they watched him unlock his cab, parked across the street. With its orange light gleaming, he drove away.

"You're worried," she said, not wanting to say it, pursuing what she sensed was best left.

He shook his head. Bannister had

PHILIP JONES GRIFFITHS/MAGNUM

Jax

been his client, his particularly, he said; he should have known. But it wasn't that and she knew it wasn't. They were lying to one another, she suddenly thought—lies of silence or whatever the term was. She sensed their lies although she hardly knew that her own were, in a way, no more than trying to hide her nervousness.

"They suit you," he said. "Your Spanish shoes."

They'd bought them, together, two days ago. She'd asked and the girl had said they were Spanish. He'd noticed them this morning in Chiltern Street, the first time she'd worn them. He'd meant to say they suited her then, but the bag lady who was usually in Chiltern Street at that time had shuffled by and he'd had to grope in his pocket for her twenty pence.

"They're comfortable," she said. "Surprisingly so."

"You thought they mightn't be."

"Yes, I did."

It was here, at this same table, that she had broken the news of her divorce, not doing so—not even intimating her intentions—until her marriage's undoing was absolute. Her "quiet divorce," she had called it, and didn't repeat her husband's protest when the only reason she had offered him was that their marriage had fallen apart. "No, there is no one else," she had deftly prevaricated, and hadn't passed that on, either. "I would have done it anyway," she had insisted in the café, though knowing that she might not have. She was happier, she had insisted, too. She felt uncluttered, a burden of duty and restriction lifted from her. She'd wanted that.

"Wire gauze, I suppose," he said, the subject now a cat that was a nuisance, coming in the bedroom windows of his house.

Although such domestic details were sometimes touched upon—his house, his garden, the neighborhood of Dollis Hill—his family remained mysterious, never described or spoken of. Since the divorce, he had visited the flat her husband had moved out of, completing small tasks for her—a way of being involved in another part of her life. But her flat never seemed quite right, so used had they become to their love affair's being conducted elsewhere and differently.

He paid and left a tip. He picked up his old scuffed briefcase from where he'd leaned it against a leg of their table, then held her coat for her. Outside, the sun was just becoming warm. She took his arm as they turned from Marylebone High Street into George Street. These streets and others like them were where their love affair belonged, its places—more intimately—the Japanese café and the Paddington Street Gardens, the picture gallery, the Running Footman. This part of London felt like home to them, although her flat was miles away, and Dollis Hill farther still.

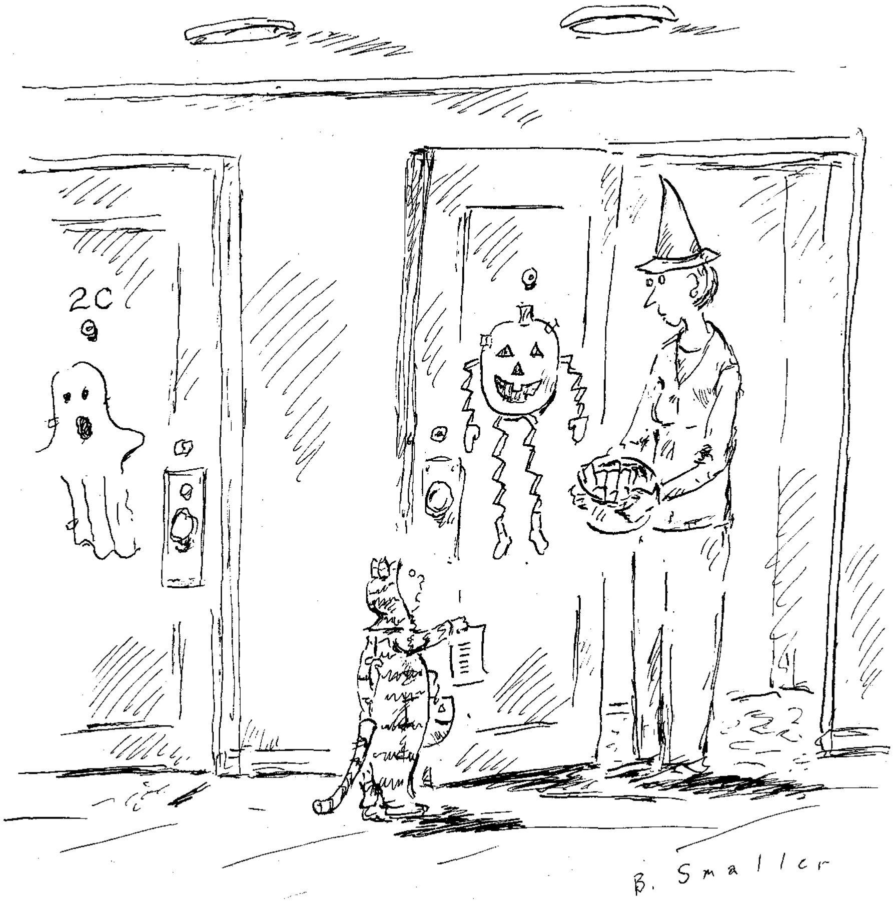
They walked on now, past the gray bulk of the Catholic church, into Manchester Square, Fitzhardinge Street, then to her bus stop. Lightly they embraced when the bus came. She waved when she was safely on it.

Walking back the way they'd come, he didn't hurry, his battered briefcase, light in his right hand, containing only his lunchtime sandwiches. He passed the picture gallery again, scaffolding ugly on its façade. A porter was polishing the brass of the hotel doors, people were leaving the church.

Still slowly, he made his way to Dorset Street, where his office was. When she'd worked there, too, everyone had suspected and then known—but not that sometimes in the early morning, far earlier than this, they had crept together up the narrow stairs, through a dampish smell before the air began to circulate in the warren that the partitions created. The wastepaper baskets had usually been cleared the night before, perfunctory hoovering had taken place; a tragedy it would have been if the cleaners had decided to come in the morning instead and still were there.

All that seemed long ago now and yet a vividness remained: the cramped space on the floor, the hurrying, the footsteps heard suddenly on the stairs, dust brushed from her clothes before he attended to his own. Even when she was no longer employed there they had a couple of times made use of the office in the early morning, but she had never wanted to and they didn't anymore. Too far away to be visited at lunchtime, her flat had never come into its own in this way after the divorce. Now and again, not often, he managed a night there, and it was then that there were the tasks she had saved up for him, completed before they left together in the morning.

He thought about her, still on her bus,



*"Trick or treat, and here's a list of my known food allergies."*

downstairs near the back, her slim black handbag on her lap, her Spanish shoes. What had she noticed? Why had she said “All right?” and said it twice? Not wanting to, and trying not to, he had passed on a mood that had begun in him, the gnawing of a disquiet he didn't want to explain because he wasn't able to, because he didn't understand it. When she'd said she missed him all the time, he should have said he missed her in that same way, because he did, because he always had.

When he had settled himself in the partitioned space allocated to him, when he had opened the window and arranged in different piles the papers that constituted the work he planned for the morning, the telephone rang.

“Hey,” the voice of the patio-layer, Bannister, rumbustiously protested. “What's all this bloody hoo-ha, then?”

“It would have been Tuesday,” she said. “Tuesday of last week. The twenty-fourth.”

There was silence, a muffled disturbance then, a hand placed over the receiver.

“We'll ring you back,” someone she hadn't been talking to before promised. “Five minutes.”

The consignment of trouser suits had gone to York, another voice informed her when she telephoned again. There was ninety-per-cent certainty about that. The Salvatore dresses had been on their way to York; the trouser suits must somehow have taken that route, too.

Hours later, when the morning had passed, when there'd been further telephone calls and faxes sent and faxes received, when the missing trouser suits had definitely been located in York, when they'd been loaded onto a van and conveyed at speed to London, the crisis was recounted in the Paddington Street Gardens. So was the fury of Bannister, the threats of legal action, the demands that fees already charged and paid should in the circumstances be returned.

“Could he have a case?” Not just politely, she took an interest, imagining the anger on the telephone, the curt responses to it, the temptation simply to put the receiver down. Still listening to all this, she opened the plastic container of the salad she had picked up on her way from the Pret A Manger in Orchard Street. He had already unwrapped his sandwiches, releasing a faint whiff of Marmite. Edges of lettuce poked out from between slices of white bread. Not much nourishment in that, she'd thought when first she'd seen his sandwiches, but had not said. There usually was egg or tomato as well, which was better; made for him that morning in Dollis Hill.

Small and sedate—no walking on the grass—the gardens were where a graveyard once had been, which for those who knew added a frisson to the atmosphere. But bright with roses today, there was nothing sombre about it for those who didn't. Girls sunbathed in this brief respite from being inside, men without their jackets strolled leisurely about. A lawnmower started up, operated by a young man with a baseball cap turned back to front. Escaping from a Walkman, jazz for an instant broke the gardens' rule and was extinguished swiftly.

She didn't want the salad she was eating. She wanted to replace the transparent lid and carry the whole thing to one of the black rubbish bins, and then sit down again beside him and take his hand, not saying anything. She wanted them to sit there while he told her what the trouble was, while all the other office people went away and the gardens were empty except for themselves and the young mothers with their children in the distant playground. She wanted to go on sitting there, not caring, either of them, about the afternoon that did not belong to them. But she ate slowly on, as he did, too, pigeons hovering a yard away.

It was the divorce, she speculated; it was the faltering at last of his acceptance of what she'd done. It wasn't difficult to imagine him lying awake at nights, more and more as time went by, for longer and longer, feeling trapped by the divorce. He would hear the breathing of his wife, a murmur from a dream. He would watch light breaking the dark, slivers at first at the edges of the curtains through which the marauding cat had been known to pass. He would try to think of something else, to force into his consciousness a different time of his life, childhood, the first day in an office and all the strangeness there had been. But always, instead, there was what there was.

“It's over, isn't it?” she said.

He screwed up the foil that had wrapped his sandwiches and lobbed it into the bin nearest to where they sat. He nearly always didn't miss. He didn't now.

“I'm using up your life,” he said.

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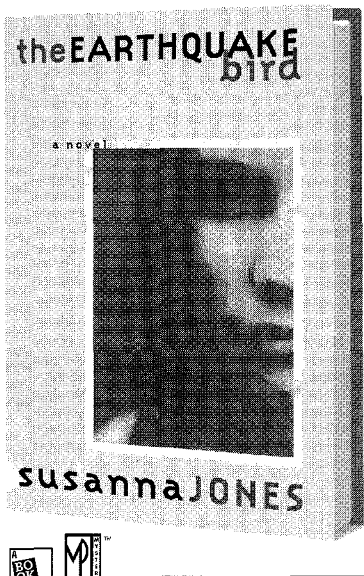

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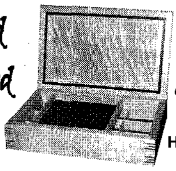

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Her unfinished salad was on the seat between them, where his briefcase was, too. When they'd been employed in the same office, their surreptitious lunches among the dozy attendants in the picture gallery hadn't been necessary when it rained; there'd been the privacy of his partitioned space, a quietness in the building then, sometimes a transistor playing gently behind a closed door, usually not even that. But always they had preferred their picnic in the gardens.

"It's what I want," she said.

"You deserve much more."

"Is it the divorce?" And in the same flat tone she added, "But I wanted that, too, you know. For my own sake."

He shook his head. "No, not the divorce," he said.

"No end to the heat wave, they can't see," Nell the tea woman remarked, pouring his tea from a huge metal teapot, milk already added, two lumps of sugar on the saucer. She was small and wiry, near the end of her time: when she went, there'd be a drinks machine instead.

"Thanks, Nell," he said.

It wasn't the divorce. He had weathered the tremors of the divorce, had admired—after the shock of hearing what so undramatically she had done—her calm resolve. He had let her brush away his nervousness, his alarm at first that this was a complication that, emotionally, might prove too much for both of them.

Sipping his milky tea, he experienced a pang of desire, sharp as a splinter, an assault on his senses and his heart that made him want to go to her now, to clatter down the uncarpeted stairs and out into the fresh summer air, to take a taxicab, a thing he never did, to ask for her in the much smarter office building that was hers, and say when she stepped out of the lift that of course they could not do without each other.

He shuffled through the papers that were his afternoon's work. "I note your comments regarding Section TMA (1970)," he read, "but whilst it is Revenue policy not to invoke the provisions of Section 88 unless there is substantial delay it is held that when the delay continues beyond the following April 5 these provisions are appropriate. Under all the circumstances, I propose to issue an estimated assessment which will make good an apparent loss of tax due to the Crown."

He scribbled out his protest and added it to the pile for typing. She was the stronger of the two, stoical, and her being stoical was what he'd always loved. Deprived of what they had, she would manage better, even if the circumstances suggested that she wouldn't.

He wasn't in the Running Footman when she arrived. He usually was, and no matter what, she knew he'd come. When he did, he bought their drinks, since this evening it was his turn. He carried them to where she had kept a seat for him. Sherry it was for her, medium dry. His was the week's red wine, from Poland. Muzak was playing, jazzy and sentimental.

"I'm sorry," he said before he said anything else.

"I'm happy, you know." She intended to say more. She'd thought it out during the afternoon, her sentences composed and ready. But in his company she was aware that none of that was necessary: it was he, not she, who had to do the talking. He said, again, that she deserved much more; and repeated, too, that he was using up her life.

Then, for the forty minutes that were theirs, they spoke of love—as it had been for them, as it still was, of its necessary confinement, its intensity, too, its pain, the mockery it had so often felt like, how they had never wasted it, sitting in silence in the dark of a cinema or sleeping through the handful of nights they'd spent together in her flat. They had not wasted it in lovers' quarrels, or lovers' argument. They did not waste it now, in what they said.

"Why?" she murmured when their drinks were almost finished, when the Running Footman was noisier than it had been, other office workers happy that their day was done. "Please."

He did not answer, then dragged the words out. It was in people's eyes, he said. In Chiltern Street it was what the bag lady he gave alms to saw, and the taxi-driver in the Japanese café, and their waitress there, and the sleepy attendants of the picture gallery, and people who glanced at them in the gardens. In all the places of their love affair—here, too—it was what people saw. She was his bit on the side.

"I can't bear it that they think that," he said.

"It doesn't matter what people think. Come to the flat now."

He shook his head. She'd known he

would: impulses had never been possible. It was nothing, what he was saying; of course it didn't matter. She said so again, a surge of relief gathering. More than anything, more than ever before in all the time they'd been in love, she wanted to be with him, to watch him getting his ticket for the tube, to walk with him past the murky King and Queen public house at the corner of India Street, the betting shop, the launderette. Four times he'd been to her flat: two-day cases, in Liverpool or Norwich. She'd never wanted to know what he said in Dollis Hill.

"I don't mind in the least," she said. "What people think. Really I don't." She smiled, her hand on his arm across the table, her fingers pressing. "Of course not."

He looked away and she, too, found herself staring at the brightly lit bottles behind the bar. "My God, I do," he whispered. "My God, I mind."

"And also, you know, it isn't true."

"You're everything to me. Everything in the world."

"Telephone," she said, her voice low, too, the relief she'd felt draining away already. "Say that something's come up suddenly." It had always been he who had made the suggestion about his visiting her flat, and always weeks before the night he had in mind. "No, no," she said. "Of course you can't."

She had never asked, she did not know, why it was he would not leave his marriage. His reason, she had supposed, was all the reasons there usually were. They would not walk this evening by the murky public house and call in at the off-license for wine. She would not see him differently in her flat, at home there and yet not quite. It was extraordinary that so much should end because of something slight. She wondered what it would feel like, waking up in the night, not knowing immediately what the dread she'd woken to was, searching her sudden consciousness and finding there the empty truth and futile desperation.

"It's no more than an expression," she said.

He knew she understood, in spite of all her protestations, as he had when she arranged her divorce. It had become an agitation for her, being married to someone else, but he had never minded that she was. A marriage that had died, and being haunted by how people considered the person you loved, were far from the heart of love itself, yet these had nagged. They would grow old together while never being together, lines ravaging her features, eyes dulled by expectation's teasing. They would look back from their rare meetings as the years closed over this winning time and take solace from it. Was that there, too, in the bag lady's eyes, and idly passing through strangers' half-interested reflections?

"I haven't explained this well," he said, and heard her say there was tomorrow. He shook his head. No, not tomorrow, he said.

For longer than just today she had been ready for that, because of course you had to be. Since the beginning she had been ready for it, and since the beginning she had been resolute that she would not attempt to claw back fragments from the debris. He was wrong: he had explained it well.

She listened while again he said he loved her, and watched while he reached out for the briefcase she had so often wanted to replace and yet could not. She smiled a little, standing up to go.

Outside, drinkers had congregated on the pavement, catching the last of the sun. They walked through them, her coat over his arm, picked up from where she'd draped it on the back of her chair. He held it for her, and waited while she buttoned it and casually tied the belt.

In the plate glass of a department-store window their reflection was arrested while they embraced. They did not see that image recording for an instant a stylishness they would not have claimed as theirs, or guessed that, in their love affair, they had possessed. Unspoken, understood, their rules of love had not been broken in the distress of ending what was not ended and never would be. Nothing of love had been destroyed today: they took that with them as they drew apart and walked away from one another, unaware that the future was less bleak than now it seemed, that in it there still would be the delicacy of their reticence, and they themselves as love had made them for a while. ♦

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# THE CRITICS

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# THE BIG MAN

*History vs. Alexander Hamilton.*

BY JOSEPH J. ELLIS

At the start of his career, when Alexander Hamilton was a young aide-de-camp drafting orders for George Washington, he kept a notebook in which he jotted down his favorite quotations from antiquity. One of them came from an oration by Demosthenes, which turned out to be a perfect expression of Hamilton's personal code: "As the general marches at the head of his troops, so ought wise politicians, if I dare use the expression, to march at the head of affairs; insomuch that they ought not to wait the *event*, to know what measures to take; but the measures which they have taken ought to produce the *event*." Leading a battle—as a soldier on the field or as a visionary Secretary of the Treasury imposing fiscal order on the American economy—Hamilton felt compelled to press his own personality on events in a style that presumed its superiority. Thomas Jefferson, who both hated and feared Hamilton, once called him "a host within himself." John Adams, who despised him, claimed that Hamilton, along with Aaron Burr, possessed just the right combination of brilliance and ambition to become an American Napoleon.

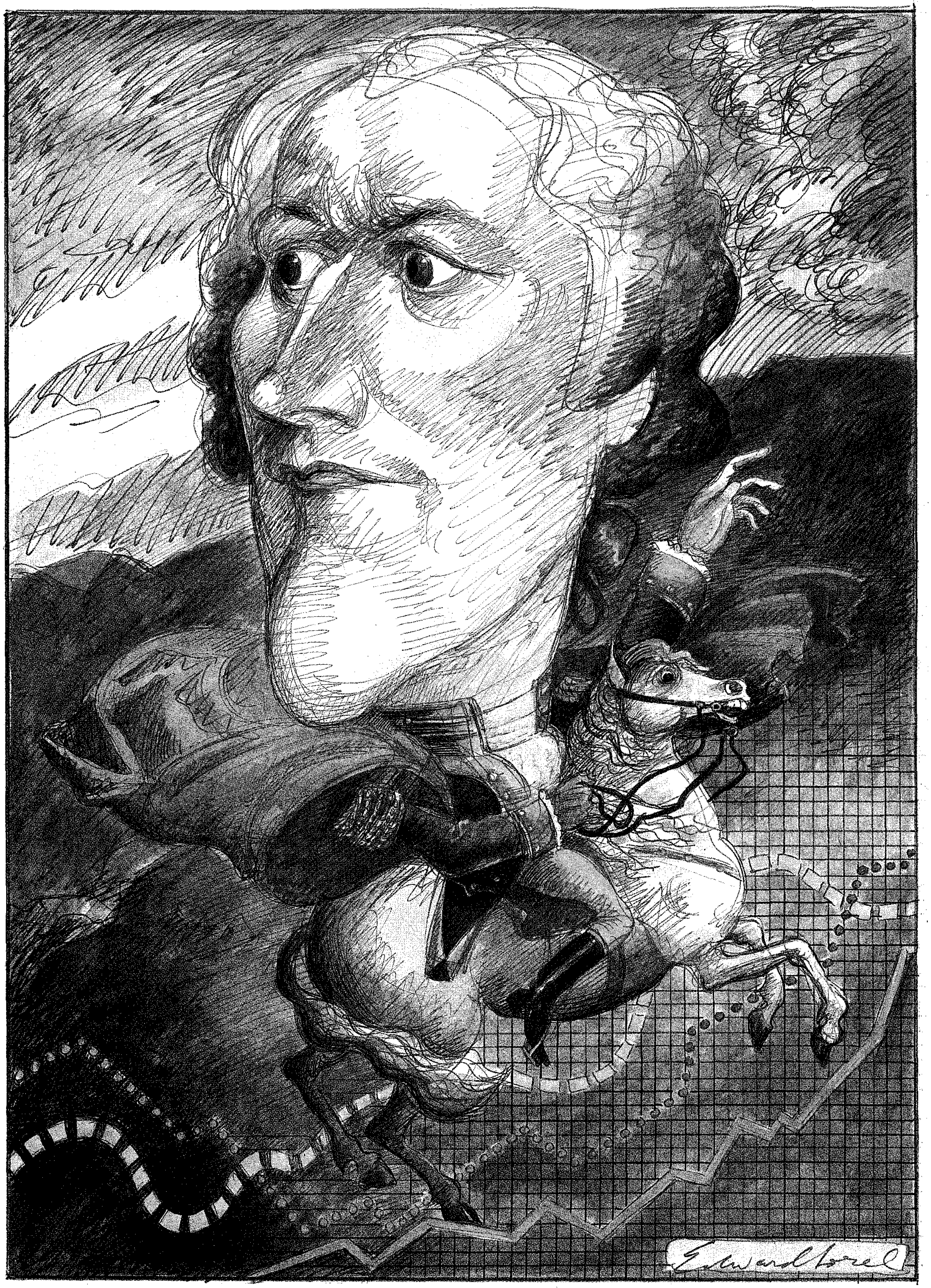
The mention of Burr flashes us forward to Hamilton's famous end, in Weehawken, New Jersey, on July 11, 1804. Trying to figure out just what happened during the exchange of shots between Burr and Hamilton has become a cottage industry for generations of historians, with most scholars concluding that Hamilton never fired at Burr. Two things are clear: first, that the same compulsion to see the world as a set of personal challenges carried Hamilton across the Hudson River to meet Burr; second, that a .54-calibre ball from Burr's pistol ricocheted off Hamilton's rib, pierced his liver and diaphragm, then lodged in his backbone. He died the next day, attended by his wife, Elizabeth, their seven children, and the Episcopal bishop of New York. Two days later, most of the city turned out to see Hamilton's mahogany casket carried to Trinity Church, trailed by his favorite horse, the saddle empty and the boots placed backward in the stirrups.

The scene invokes memories of the funeral procession of John F. Kennedy, another martyred national leader with charismatic credentials and a veritable boatload of credible critics. But the arguments about Hamilton's life and legacy cut deeper than our ongoing arguments about the Camelot mythology. The debate about Kennedy is a conversation about the unhappy fate of liberalism in the last half of the twentieth century. The debate over Hamilton is a conversation about America's original intentions, about the proper role of government in orchestrating domestic and foreign policy, about the "true meaning" of the American Revolution. These are classical questions that actually establish the intellectual foundation and framework for all subsequent American politics, Camelot included.

The arrival of the new Library of America edition of Hamilton's "Writings" ($40), selected, with sense and savvy, by Joanne B. Freeman, affords an opportunity to revisit America's argument without end in its formative stage. The new volume, the rough equivalent of literary canonization, firmly establishes Hamilton's place in the American pantheon. It also arrives amid a recent wave of popular interest in the Revolutionary generation. John Adams appears to be the chief beneficiary, with David McCullough's biography and Congress considering a major memorial to the Adams family in the nation's capital. The History Channel has produced several miniseries on the political leadership of the Revolutionary era, and various movie projects are under consideration.

It is a somewhat mysterious phenomenon. Popular books and films about the Civil War abound, but the Revolutionary era has thus far escaped literary or cinematic capture. (The only critically and commercially successful film I can recall is John Ford's "Drums Along the Mohawk.") Perhaps it is too far away chronologically for ordinary readers and viewers to envision realistically. (There are no Mathew Brady photographs.) Perhaps some patriotic version of an incense cloud envelops the era, transforming profane human striving into sacred scenes with providential overtones. (Emerson claimed that all succeeding generations could see God only at second hand, while the founding generation saw him face to face.) Whatever the causes, we seem to be experiencing a discernible surge of public interest which is overriding these long-standing blockages, an urge to see the Revolutionary generation itself face to face.

Within the vanguard members of that generation, no one had a less auspicious start than Alexander Hamilton, whom Adams called "a bastard brat of a Scotch pedlar." Hamilton was born in 1755 on the West Indian island of Nevis, the illegitimate son of an impoverished beauty of French origin and a Scottish merchant of questionable nature. By 1769, the fourteen-year-old boy was already on his own, working in a merchant house on St. Croix. His first surviving



*The debate over Hamilton is a conversation about the proper role of government, about the "true meaning" of the Revolution.*

letter, written to a childhood friend, dates from that year and ends with a startlingly candid confession of youthful ambition: "I shall Conclude saying I wish there was a War."

If Hamilton's ambition was there from the start, so was his precocity. In 1772, a Presbyterian minister in St. Croix raised funds to send the boy genius to America. Princeton rejected his application because he insisted on moving through the curriculum at his own accelerated pace. King's College, now Columbia, accepted him in 1774. A year later, he published "The Farmer Refuted," an eighty-page pamphlet that succinctly synthesized all the constitutional arguments for independence from Great Britain and foresaw the enormous logistical difficulties the British Army would face in attempting to subjugate the Americans. All his predictions proved correct. He was twenty years old.

In March of 1776, he was commissioned as an artillery officer and saw action in the retreat of George Washington's army across New Jersey. A year later, he joined Washington's staff as aide-de-camp at the rank of lieutenant colonel. In the trademark Hamilton style, he was constantly brimming over with ideas on how to run everything. He and a fellow-aide, John Laurens, proposed a plan for offering freedom to those South Carolina slaves willing to serve for the duration of the war. As Hamilton explained to John Jay, "An essential part of the plan is to give them their freedom with their muskets," as well as to provide a model for a more general emancipation after the war. In 1780, he began drafting lengthy letters to members of the Continental Congress, criticizing the inadequate powers of the government under the Articles of Confederation. He published his prescription for a more energetic and consolidated national government in a series of essays entitled "The Continentalist" (1781-82), envisioning a system of national finance which pretty much anticipated the fiscal reforms he would implement a decade later. The new nation, he insisted, required a new kind of republican government, "and it is as ridiculous to seek for models in the simple ages of Greece and Rome, as it would be to go in quest of them among the Hottentots and Laplanders."

These crucial years also witnessed the forging of his relationship with Washington, who soon became the father he never had, and therefore both the recipient of his most devoted service and the target of his most Oedipal urges. He was always touchy about any threat to his honor. In 1781, a minor misunderstanding about etiquette provoked a major tantrum from Hamilton, who resigned his position in Washington's staff, declaring that "for three years past I have felt no friendship for him and have professed none." The breach was eventually closed, mostly at Washington's initiative. Nevertheless, it was symptomatic of Hamilton's abiding frustration at working alongside the most potent authority figure in all of American history. Washington always excused Hamilton's periodic bouts of petulance as the unavoidable excesses that accompany sheer brilliance. "That he is *ambitious* I shall readily grant," he explained to one of Hamilton's critics, "but it is of that laudable kind, which prompts a man to excel in whatever he takes in hand." Hamilton, for his part, never felt comfortable in a dependent role. When Washington died, in 1799, Hamilton made the startling observation that "he was an Aegis very essential to me," as if Washington had been his aide-de-camp, rather than the other way around.

*"Thank you for your recent E-mail. I appreciate your concern. However, I am, at this time, completely satisfied with the size of my penis."*

What Hamilton probably also meant was that Washington was the singular embodiment of national union, America's only all-purpose, indispensable hero. From the early seventeen-eighties onward, Hamilton's enduring obsession was to create a more viable and powerful American nation-state, making the term "United States" into a singular rather than a plural noun. Without Washington's wholehearted support, no such effort stood the slightest chance of success, chiefly because what was necessary for a viable American nation-state was at odds with what the American Revolution claimed to stand for.

At the nub of the argument the colonists had used to discredit the authority of Parliament and the British monarchy was a profound distrust of any central authority that issued directives from a great distance. This visceral skepticism of unseen authority was the centerpiece of what were called "Whig principles." No one believed more passionately in this version of "Whig principles" than Thomas Jefferson, who, as the principal author of the Declaration of Independence, could plausibly claim authority on the matter. (If you think about it, where in the Declaration is there a kind word about governmental power of any sort?) Judged against the Jeffersonian standard of "pure republicanism," the whole vision of an energetic federal government which Hamil-

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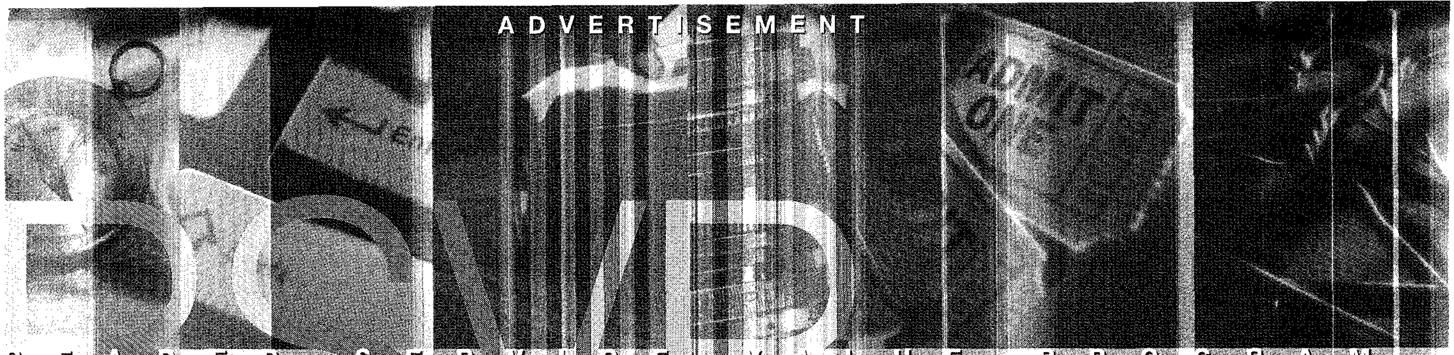

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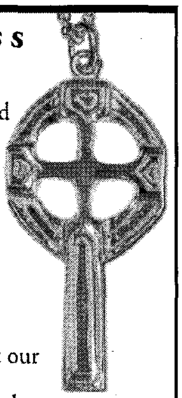

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ton helped to launch in the seventeen-eighties was a nightmare, and the policies of the Federalist Party which he spearheaded in the seventeen-nineties represented a hostile takeover of the true meaning of the American Revolution.

All of this exposes the somewhat awkward fact that the Revolutionary era produced two different and logically contradictory "founding moments." The first founding established American independence, in 1776; the second established American nationhood, in 1787 and 1788. The core principle of the first founding is individual liberty. It has both radical and libertarian implications, because it views any subordination of personal freedom to governmental discipline as dangerous. The core principle of the second founding is collectivist rather than individualist, for it views the constitutional settlement of 1787-88 as the sensible surrender of personal, state, and sectional interests to the larger purposes of nationhood. It has both conservative and proto-socialist implications, because it does not view the individual as the sovereign unit in the political equation and is more comfortable with government policy as a focussing device for national development.

Between 1787 and 1795, the most creative and productive phase of his career, Hamilton made himself the dominant spokesman for the values of the second founding. His chief collaborator during the first half of this crucial decade—who, in 1790, jumped over to the other side—was James Madison, arguably the most sophisticated, and surely the most subtle, political thinker of the Revolutionary generation. Hamilton took the lead at the Annapolis Convention (1786), drafting the address that recommended the calling of a Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia the following year. Madison took the lead in Philadelphia, in part because Hamilton was stymied by his two fellow-delegates from New York, who opposed any changes in the existent confederation of states, but mostly because Hamilton's views on the shape of the new government were so widely—some said inadmissibly—beyond the pale. Arguing that the Virginia Plan, which served as a framework for the ongoing debates, was "pork still, with a little change of the sauce," Hamilton advocated a kind of Executive-King who would serve for life, a Senate modelled on the British House of Lords, and the effective abolition of all state governments. Witnesses found his five-hour oration both impressive and outrageous. Anecdotal evidence suggests that Hamilton made only one other contribution during the debates on the convention floor. When Benjamin Franklin proposed that each session in the future open with a prayer, Hamilton allegedly replied that he saw no need to call in "foreign aid."

In 1787, Hamilton assumed the lead again, proposing the project that became "The Federalist Papers" and writing fifty-one of the eighty-five essays. There is a double irony to Hamilton's contribution: first, this unquestioned classic of American political thought was written with desperate speed, against tight deadlines, so that what subsequent generations have admired as the great rumination on republican government was actually produced without much time for rumination at all; second, Hamilton's multilayered defense of the Constitution did not reflect his true convictions, which were that the form of government proposed in that document was grossly inadequate to the task at hand (i.e., "a frail and worthless fabric"), and that unless it was amended along the lines he had suggested the fragile American nation would soon dissolve into a series of state or regional sovereignties. In effect, Hamilton saw his role in "The Federalist Papers" as that of a lawyer obliged to mount his most brilliant defense on behalf of a dubious client.

If his great contribution to American political theory was improvised and even disingenuous, his true genius was put on display between 1789 and 1795 as America's premier economic thinker. The fiscal program he proposed at the Treasury was based on two controversial and sweeping premises: that the American economy required supervision and strategic management at the national level; and that concentrated wealth was a blessing rather than a curse, because money concentrated became capital. From these two premises flowed his comprehensive financial program, call-

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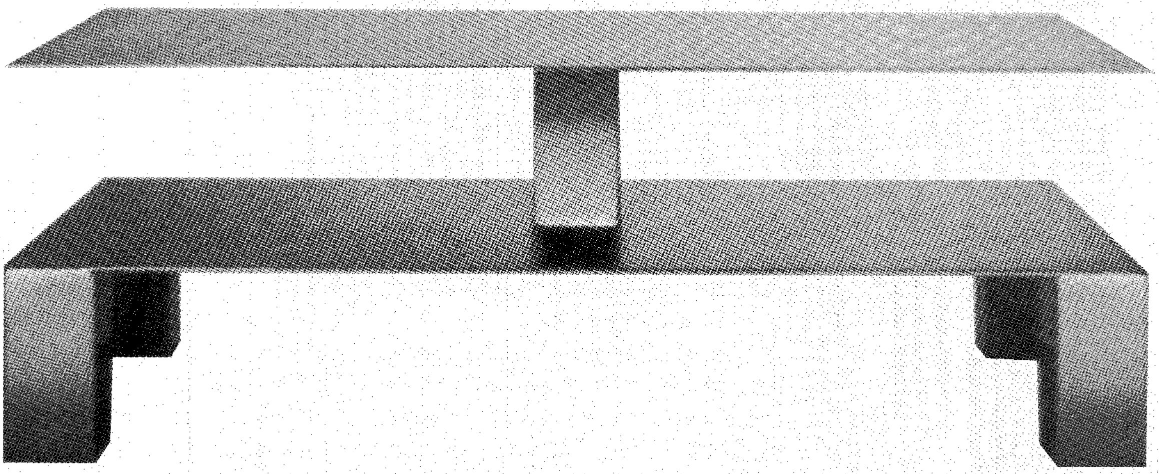

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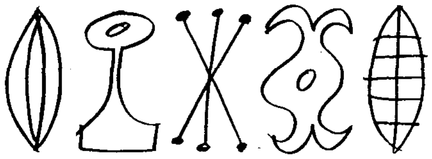
ing for federal assumption of state debts, the funding of the entire national debt, the creation of a national banking system, and the encouragement of an embryonic manufacturing sector.

South of the Potomac, and most especially in the fertile minds of Jefferson and Madison, these premises and their political implications quickly grew into menacing monsters. As the Virginians saw it, proper economic policy consisted in simply getting out of the way, to allow the natural laws to proceed unimpeded. The federal institutions required to manage the national economy conjured up images of the bloated and corrupt British system that the American Revolution had presumably repudiated forever. Moreover, concentrated wealth was the economic version of the dreaded "consolidation," the accumulation of power in the hands of the few rather than its diffusion to the many. Hamilton was tone deaf to these political arguments because his frame of reference was more economic than political. What for Madison appeared to be the dangerous clustering of political power was for Hamilton the synergy of aggregated investment. It probably helped that concentrated political power never troubled Hamilton very much—especially if he was orchestrating the concentration.

The remainder of the decade became a prolonged shouting match between these contrasting visions of the American republic and competing versions of America's original intentions. During Washington's second term, Hamilton became the de-facto Prime Minister, with a roving mandate to resolve constitutional disputes, put down the Whiskey Rebellion, and define the Federalist agenda in general. Foreign policy entered the argument in a big way after 1793, with Hamilton making the case for a pro-English version of American neutrality against Jefferson's love affair with the French Revolution. Love, or at least lust, also made a cameo appearance in 1797, when Hamilton's affair with Maria Reynolds was exposed in the press. (Hamilton publicly acknowledged his adultery—Reynolds's husband had been blackmailing him—and apologized to his wife and family, but insisted that his personal failing never interfered with his public duties.) Even after his retirement from office, in 1795, Hamilton continued to play the role of "the little lion" of Federalism, drafting Washington's farewell address, working behind the scenes to manipulate policy within the Adams Cabinet—the chief source of Adams's conviction that Hamilton was the American Lucifer—and eventually writing a wholly self-destructive pamphlet that accused Adams of mental instability, thereby assisting if not assuring Jefferson's election in 1801, which sounded the death knell for Federalism. Hamilton, in fact, played a crucial role in Jefferson's victory by urging his fellow-Federalists in the House of Representatives to vote against Burr, who had tied with Jefferson in the Electoral College. By the time he showed up for his "interview" with Aaron Burr in Weehawken, his own political career was ruined and the Federalist cause that he had championed, in Jefferson's harsh but accurate verdict, had sunk into "an abyss from which there shall be no resurrection for it."

If that is the Hamilton story, or at least one effort at a fair-minded sketch of the story, the question remains: What should we make of it? For more than fifty years after his death, the answer was reasonably clear: not much, since Hamilton's legacy remained buried at the bottom of the abyss that Jefferson had prepared for Federalism. The flame still flickered in pockets of New England, and since most of the schoolbooks, including the popular "McGuffey Readers," were produced there, Hamilton's role in the American Revolution was not completely forgotten. The bankers of New York City hung his portrait in the Chamber of Commerce, a gesture of respect for the one Founding Father who thought and cared a lot about money. A statue was erected before the Merchants Exchange, Roman toga and all. But the dominant image, to the extent there was an image, was negative. Martin Van Buren first framed the anti-Hamilton argument that would echo through the ages in a speech before



the Senate in 1828. It depicted Hamilton and the Federalists as covert monarchists who hijacked "the spirit of '76" and sold the soul of the American Revolution to investment bankers. Jefferson's election became "the revolution of 1800," when the money changers were driven from the American temple.

This flagrantly melodramatic and thoroughly Jeffersonian interpretation has dominated the history books ever since, with two or three exceptions. The first occurred in the post-Civil War years, when the Northern victory seemed to clinch the Hamiltonian reading of the Constitution as a statement of federal sovereignty over the states. With the Union now unified, Hamilton emerged as the great prophet of nationalism, a sort of American Bismarck. Even during this brief Hamiltonian surge, however, there were signs of how difficult it was to fit him into American mythology as a hero. For despite the apparent alignment of Hamilton's national vision with the victorious Union cause, the greatest contemporary symbol of that cause, Abraham Lincoln, embraced Jefferson as the primal source of the values the North was fighting to defend. Even though Hamilton's antislavery credentials were vastly superior, the Great Emancipator found his own inspiration in Jefferson's famous words in the Declaration of Independence.

A second Hamiltonian surge occurred in the first decade of the twentieth century. This made logical and historical sense, since Hamilton's vision of an urban, industrial America and an economy dominated by corporate power had clearly displaced Jefferson's bucolic vision of yeoman farmers and an ever-expanding frontier. Henry Cabot Lodge wrote an admiring (and still surprisingly readable) biography of Hamilton. Theodore Roosevelt preferred Hamilton's vigorous, masculine style to Jefferson's feline femininity. Gertrude Atherton wrote a popular historical novel, "The Conqueror" (1902), in which Hamilton appeared as a dazzling mixture of Horatio Alger and Alexander the Great.

But the crowning compliment came in Herbert Croly's "The Promise of American Life" (1909). Croly adopted the familiar Jefferson-Hamilton motif but reversed the customary verdict. Jefferson had made a religion of "the people" by sermonizing seductively on their infallibility. Hamilton was "the sounder thinker, the constructive statesman, the candid and honorable, if erring, gentleman," who even had the courage to acknowledge, as he had once put it, that "your people, sir, your people is a great beast." The Jefferson side of the political dialogue, Croly argued, was a baleful blend of "intellectual superficiality and insincerity" which was now self-evidently irrelevant to the needs of modern American society. Hamilton, on the other hand, with his unbridled nationalism, his belief in a vigorous federal government that managed the economy and proactively set the political agenda, had displaced Jefferson as the prophet of the proto-socialist state that America was destined to become in the twentieth century. Jefferson's America had died; Hamilton's was dawning.

During the course of American history, everyone who bet against Jefferson has eventually lost. Thus it happened that when Croly's prescription for energetic government led by a powerful executive presence materialized in the nineteen-thirties, the man who named it the New Deal and symbolized its energetic character declared that it was a thoroughly Jeffersonian enterprise. It was the Lincoln story all over again. Franklin Roosevelt's political agenda was the epitome of everything that Jefferson despised and vilified as despotic. But Roosevelt simply, unabashedly, viscerally, loved Jefferson. One of his favorite history books (and the only book he ever reviewed) was "Jefferson and Hamilton: The Struggle for Democracy in America," by Claude Bowers, an updated version of the old interpretation, with the familiar plotline of Hamiltonian aristocracy against Jeffersonian democracy. Roosevelt was the moving force behind the decision to build a major monument to Jefferson on the Tidal Basin. Just before D Day, in 1944, F.D.R. travelled down to an estate near Monticello so that he could be near the spirit of his hero when news of the Allied landings at Normandy arrived. Once again, Hamilton became "the forgotten man," just when the projection of national power he had championed burst so conspicuously onto the world.

The story could be continued to

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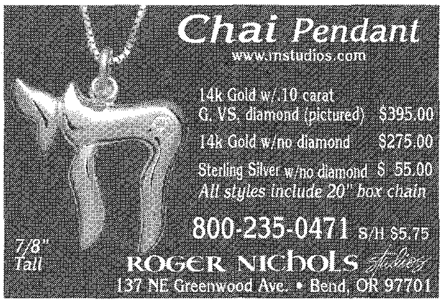
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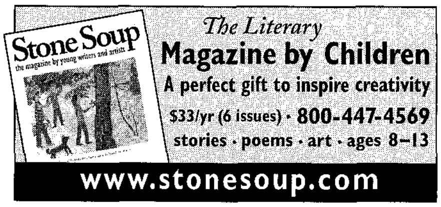
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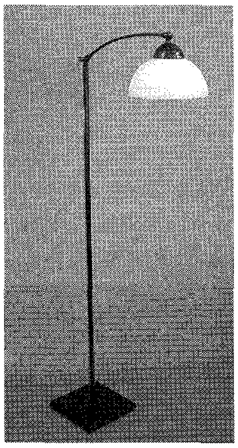

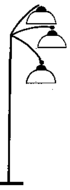

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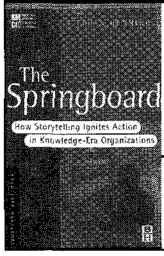

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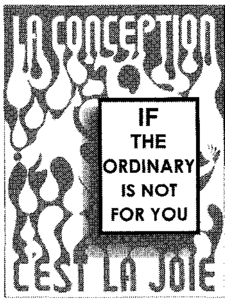

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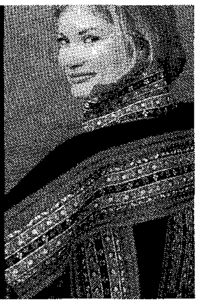

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the present, though the larger pattern remains the same. Jefferson, along with Washington and Lincoln, is a fixed star in the American firmament. Hamilton is a comet that appears briefly, then departs. (Adams, at least until recently, has been a black hole.) In the purported dialogue between Jefferson and Hamilton about the role of government and the character of American society, Hamilton has won the argument decisively in the real world but lost it with equivalent decisiveness both in the history books and in the popular imagination.

Although Jefferson and Hamilton really did argue with each other back in the eighteenth century, the projection of their debate as the archetypal dialogue in American political culture has become a historical cartoon. It does have the advantage of linking our current arguments about the power of government to its origins in the Revolutionary era—no small achievement. And it makes palpable perhaps the most distinctive accomplishment of the Revolutionary generation; namely, unlike revolutionary élites in France, Russia, and China, it did not insist on a resolution of the debate about the true meaning of the Revolution but instead found a way to contain the explosive energies of that debate within an ongoing argument that was eventually institutionalized in political parties and built into the fabric of our national identity. But the neat and tidy symbolism of the Jefferson-Hamilton coupling invariably distorts all the messy particularities of the story, and it almost always privileges our present agenda over theirs. Not incidentally, it consistently privileges Jefferson over Hamilton and stigmatizes the entire Federalist persuasion as undemocratic.

The awkward truth is that all the leading members of the Revolutionary generation, Jefferson included, would fail any litmus test on democracy designed to measure an affinity for the values and attitudes Alexis de Tocqueville described in the eighteen-thirties. Hamilton, to be sure, would get the lowest score of all, which is the chief reason that his legacy has found it so difficult to compete successfully in the mythological sweepstakes. It is also the reason Hamilton himself observed near the end that "this American world was not made for me." But the same observation applies to the Revolutionary generation as a whole, which came and went before full-blooded democracy and the cult of "the common man" became the nineteenth century's version of Jefferson's self-evident truths. Both Hamilton and Jefferson had come to regard themselves as charter members of a lost generation.

Hamilton, of course, was not just pre-democratic, he was anti-democratic. For that very reason, however, his career renders more dramatically discernible the alluring differentness of political leadership in the Revolutionary era. The quotation from Demosthenes that he copied in his notebook as a young man was inherently élitist. It presumed a perpetual gap between popular opinion and the long-term public interest. It celebrated a studied indifference to the majority will and an abiding distaste for the kind of political wisdom currently provided by pollsters. It idealized a classical rather than a modern leadership style that is simultaneously admirable and suicidal in our democratic political culture. It is, I believe, a major cause of the recent revival of interest in the Revolutionary generation, for it speaks to our frustration with leaders who, instead of shaping public opinion, follow it.

Any straightforward comparison between then and now is ludicrous. The best we can do is learn what Hamilton's distinctive contribution to our national origins teaches, and appreciate the ironies. My version would go like this: the system of checks and balances we associate with the Constitution was also built into the leadership class of the Revolutionary generation; as the strongest voice for a nationalistic version of the American Revolution and the commercial character of the American republic, Hamilton was an essential ingredient in the political chemistry of the era, dangerous if isolated and unopposed, indispensable in the larger mix; and the Federalist cause that he championed had legitimate claims on the Revolutionary legacy but no place in America's democratic future. And without Hamilton and Federalism there just might have been no national future at all. ♦

# BRIEFLY NOTED

Look at Me, *by Jennifer Egan (Nan A. Talese/Doubleday; $24.95).* Egan's moving but circumscribed first novel, "The Invisible Circus," in no way prepared readers for the millennial ambitions of her second—a comic, richly imagined, and stunningly written exploration of the American obsession with self-invention. The rebirth of Charlotte Swenson, a model, takes place in a cornfield outside of her detested home town, Rockford, Illinois, when she's pulled from the fiery wreckage of her car. A plastic surgeon painstakingly re-creates her face, but now both friends and strangers pass her on the street without a second glance. While Charlotte tries to "reposition" herself in New York, her namesake, the plain and unnervingly direct teen-age daughter of her best friend in high school, struggles to slip the snares of her confining life in Rockford; ostracized by her peers, she switches schools and initiates an affair with a secretive stranger. Egan's novel broadly and brightly satirizes the grid of power and celebrity as its older heroine negotiates Manhattan's brave new world of Internet entrepreneurs and razor-wielding fashion photographers. But the author is also attentive to those who live in the shadowy interstices of American life: a kid skateboarder with cancer; an alcoholic private eye; a mad professor obsessed with a time when our industries produced things instead of images. Egan's portrait of the younger Charlotte's lover, a rage-choked terrorist nestling into the heartland, is particularly chilling. And yet her novel is also an antidote for the ills it describes—an energetic, unorthodox, quintessentially American vision of America.

Common Prayer, *by Ramie Targoff (Chicago; $17).* What could be more private than prayer? In fact, internal devotion and visible worship have long been inextricable, as this remarkable study of early modern England shows. Prayer was formal, public, and performed—the idea was that "bodily reverence," in the words of one religious treatise, would regulate faith. After the Book of Common Prayer was assembled, in 1549, the use of vernacular English for divine purposes influenced devotional poetry as well. Targoff's scholarship sheds new light on the religious life of both sixteenth-century England and twenty-first-century America.

The Bridge at No Gun Ri, *by Charles J. Hanley, Sang-Hun Choe, and Martha Mendoza (Holt; $26).* In 1998, the authors uncovered evidence of a brutal 1950 massacre of South Koreans by American soldiers in the hamlet of No Gun Ri. This account, expanded from their Pulitzer Prize-winning reportage, raises questions about military preparedness and civilian involvement that are as relevant today as they were half a century ago. By insisting on both the inexperience of the American troops and the innocence of the Korean villagers, however, the authors create two classes of victims without adequately examining the hard facts of American policy. Still, the book is a sobering testament to the ravages of combat.

Conscious and Verbal, *by Les Murray (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $23).* The poet became a minor celebrity when he awoke from a three-week coma and was pronounced "conscious and verbal," but this new volume is more concerned with his familiar Australian topography: dead dogs, the "Internationale," oysters, soil, the color yellow. Murray sticks to the cheerfully formal lines that distinguish his work while letting his voice shift between chestnuts of local dialect and a brawny but humble standard English. His bikers are "Santas from Hell / like a whole shoal leaning / wide-wristed, their tautness stable / in fluency." This is a survivor's poetry commissioned not by trauma but by the confidence of being alive and able.

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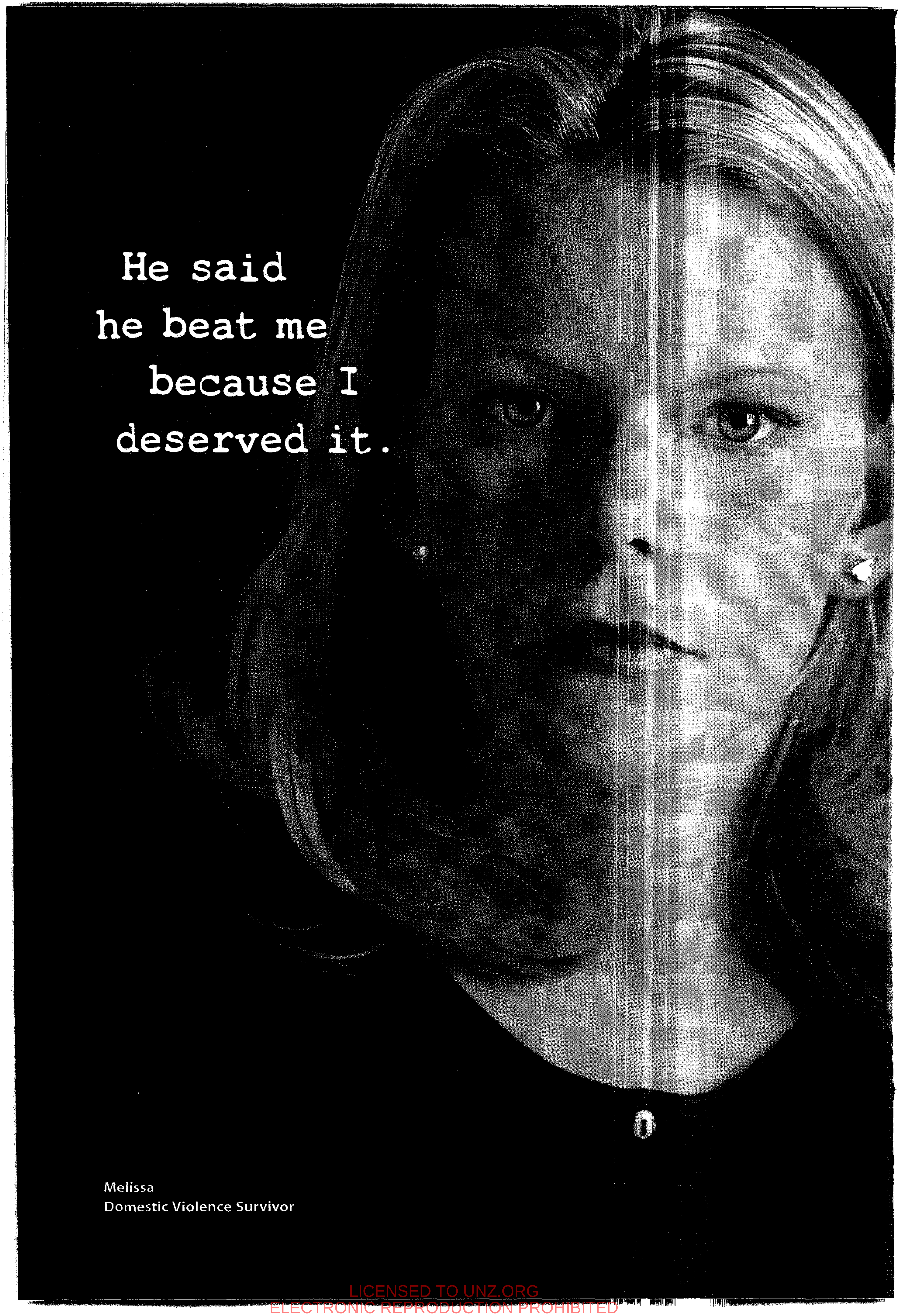
He said
he beat me
because I
deserved it.
Melissa
Domestic Violence Survivor

## HELPING END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

**"He tried to strangle me last night."**

Melissa cried as she wrote these words, eight months pregnant and seeking an order of protection from her husband. Their high school romance had seemed like a fairy tale, but when the honeymoon ended, the beatings began. Terrified, she hid her abuse from family and friends. Once she was finally free from her abusive husband, Melissa began to share her story with other young women, so they would know that no one should live with domestic violence.

# Now I know
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Too often, society blames victims of domestic violence for not leaving, rather than holding the abusers responsible. The reality is that fear, financial dependency and concern for the children can make the idea of leaving seem impossible. No one deserves to be abused. And everyone should have someone to turn to. With your support, domestic violence programs across America can offer hope and new beginnings. Just ask Melissa.

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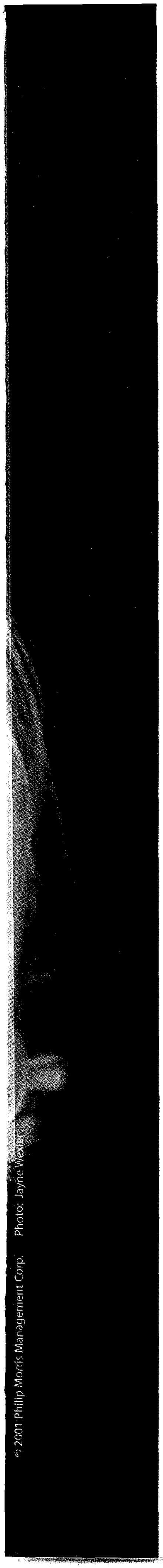
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Photo: Jayne Wexler

THE ART WORLD

# THE THIN MAN

*Giacometti's wasted heroes.*

BY PETER SCHJELDAHL

I've discovered a rewarding way of looking at sculptures by Alberto Giacometti, who is the subject of an elegant retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art, where it will continue until January 8th. Stand behind them. Examine their backs and peer out over their shoulders, if they have any. (Most of them do; Giacometti was terrific at shoulders.) Gaze into the space into which the figures are gazing. Suddenly you have a sense of how Giacometti's art inhabits the world—worriedly, with touching eagerness. You understand how much the figures—the early Surrealist "objects," no less than the famous skinny statues that occupied Giacometti from the nineteen-forties until his death, in 1966—strive to please, and how hard this is on them. They may bring to mind dreams in which one is thrust onstage without a script. Viewing them from backstage entertained me mightily at the show. But this tactic failed me in the last galleries, which feature works from the finally self-confident climax of Giacometti's five-decade career. A ghostly stage manager started shooing me out into the audience, where I belonged.

Giacometti was born in 1901 in Stampa, Switzerland, into an artistic family. His painter father encouraged him, and his younger brother, Diego, the designer, was a lifelong intimate. Alberto's hypersensitive nature received a jolt in 1921, when an acquaintance with whom he was travelling fell ill and died. Witnessing the event left him with a fear of death that bordered on panic. (He always slept with a light on.) But he was a gregarious habitué of cafés, and since he tended to work in spurts, between long stretches of fretful idleness, he had plenty of time to indulge himself. From 1927 on, his home was a shabby, barrack-like studio building in Montparnasse, warmed by the comings and goings of friends and admirers. His circle included most of the leading avant-garde artists and writers in France, among whom—as photographs of him convey—he moved as a strikingly craggy and ineffably humorous personage. Imagining him invokes the romance of Paris—not as a city of light but as a metropolis of soiled rooms, chance encounters, and eroticized intelligence. But there is something stern about him that forbids sappiness.

Giacometti was the most uncomfortable great artist of the twentieth century. Existentialist? Sure. Jean-Paul Sartre's canonization of him in postwar Paris made brilliant sense. But then so had André Breton's embrace of him as a Surrealist paragon in Paris between the wars. Anyone pushing a philosophy of dissatisfaction was apt to deem the glamorously miserable Swiss artist exemplary. Giacometti was grateful for acceptance, and his readiness to flatter the Zeitgeist seems to have been a cause of his anxiety. You can see the problem in the first gallery at MOMA. Youthful drawings, paintings, and busts of firm, Apollonian rigor abruptly give way to fashionably Dionysian totems and fetishes. Giacometti's gifts overqualified him for the easy things that his age demanded. He was equipped for grand, public art on symbolic themes, and, toward the end of his life, that is what he achieved.

Still, his Surrealist period produced two startling, one-off masterpieces, both from 1932: "The Palace at 4 A.M." and "Woman with Her Throat Cut." These marvels stand out in art with lightning-bolt majesty, as Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" does in literature. "The Palace at 4 A.M." is a preternaturally stilled tableau made of delicately tinkered wood. Its components include a chess-piece-like female figure; a hanging, not quite human spine; a soaring, skeletal bird-thing; a ball nested in a spoonlike shell; and a bit of glass ceiling. Freudian critics have shown that the symbolic content is anything but mysterious—or interesting. (You know: mother, father, sex, death, and so on.) What awes us is the poetry of the work's exquisite proportions, and an expressive urge that is at once vertiginous and very, very careful. Looking at the piece from behind, I felt the outward rush of its passion to connect, to reach the last rows in the theatre of the world. I loved Giacometti at that moment. Love is, among other things, the experience of wholly identifying with another person's sincerity. It is rare in art, where impersonal operations of style normally regulate violent emotions. In the case of the brutal "Woman with Her Throat Cut," a detached response is impossible.

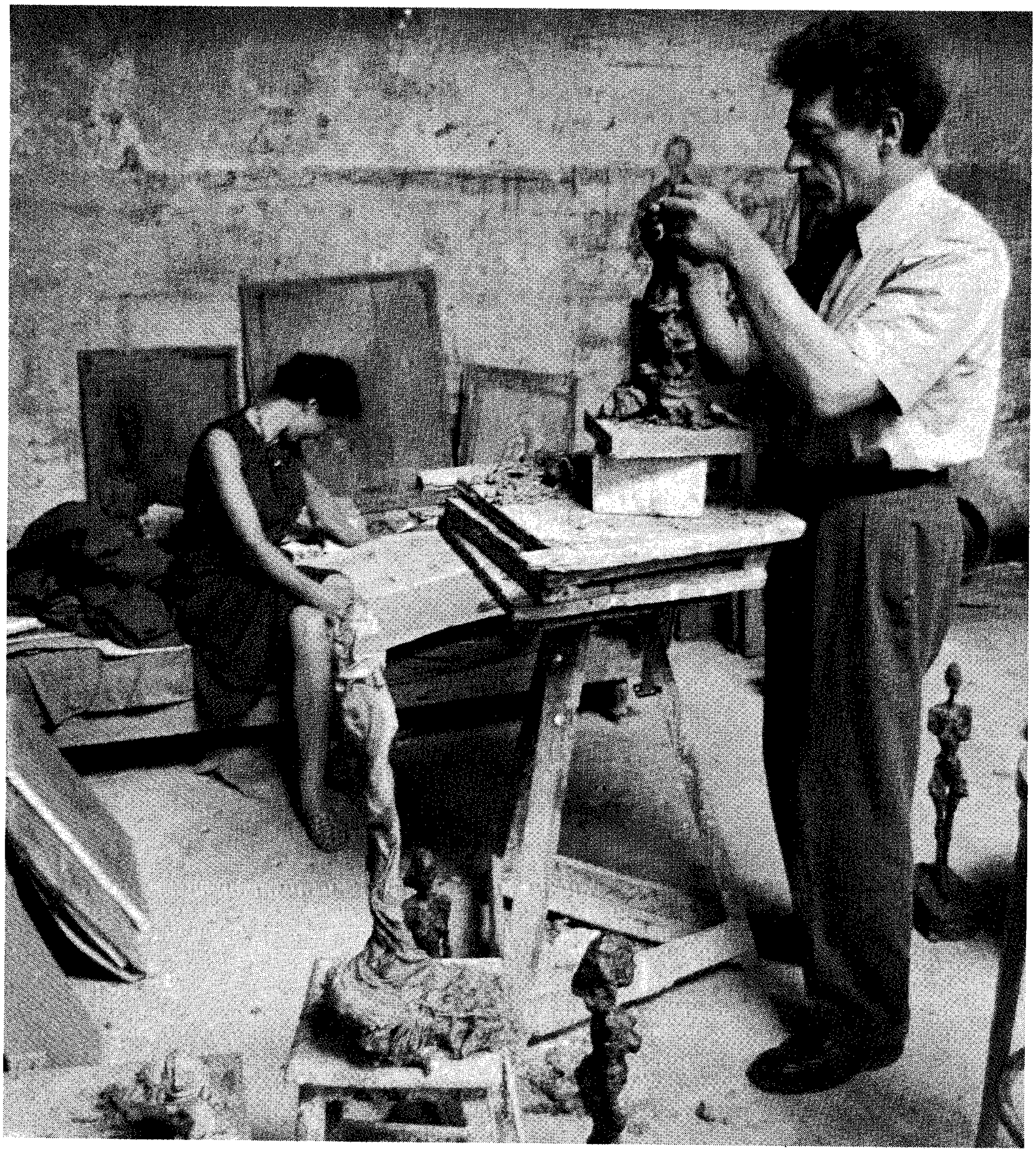
The work is pictorial, like nearly all Giacometti's sculpture. It assumes a gaze from above—perhaps that of a sadistic voyeur. It shows a spavined figure with spread legs; a tiny, screaming head at the end of an arched, notched neck; and limbs that issue in outlandish shapes, including a leaflike blob suggesting a splash of blood, on which rests a cylindrical weight. (A miracle of formal inspiration, the weight pulls the piece together, anchoring its frenetic elements.) For insight into the work's power you might want to sit beside it, on the floor, and absorb the complex tensions in the gnarled intersection of body, neck, and arms. "Woman" is an essay on specific spasms of physical agony. From this vantage point, any sense of voyeurism melts away. To render suffering so precisely is to know how it feels. Finally, notice the gold-tinged patina of the bronze: theatre again. Even Giacometti had an inclination to beguile.

Giacometti shed Surrealism's embrace in 1935, when Breton excommunicated him from the fold for returning to studio figuration. He spent the war years in Switzerland, producing sculptures so minuscule that, after the Liberation, he brought them to Paris in six matchboxes. At MOMA, one of the miniature figures stands on a massive base, traumatized and game. It is like a wisp of flame, almost but not quite extinguished. Giacometti's mature repertoire of emaciated figures grew from his matchbox Lilliput. No other European artist weathered the demoralizing ordeal of the Second World War so strongly.

A peculiarity of the MOMA show, which was mounted by a team of curators led by Christian Klemm, is its inclusion of forty Giacometti paintings.

Most of them are portraits, made after the late nineteen-forties, which pay relentless attention to the sitters' heads. Heavily reworked line and paint yield clenched visages in auras of mud. Giacometti stated his aim this way: "To see a head, to see it alive, to maintain it so." There was something compulsively fascinating for him in face-to-face encounters with people. A viewer's avidity will likely prove exhaustible. The paintings are impressively honest, but their ritual qualities consume more energy than they transmit. Though always a compelling draftsman, Giacometti had little use for the resources of painting. As a painter, he remained a sculptor—digging into space, groping for contoured mass. The effect of imposing these concerns on a recalcitrant medium becomes tiresome. One suspects a promotional hope in this show. There are a great many Giacometti paintings out there; they have never enjoyed a robust market.

Viewed conventionally, from the front, Giacometti's signature sculpted figures seem like the ravaged but ultimately heroic victims of wasting forces. The forces come from outside. It's as if the air in which the figures stand had tried to devour them. Their vibrantly tactile surfaces register less as boundaries of their bodies than as boundaries of the world beyond. Even the smallest of the figures become monumental in their obdurate resistance to the surrounding space. At MOMA, the very light crackles in the big rooms that contain the late work. More than any abstract sculptor, Giacometti anticipated the blunt presences of minimalist art which induce acute physical self-awareness in viewers. (A Giacometti—representational, pedestalled, and vertical though it may be—can put us on the spot almost as effectively as a floor piece of metal squares by Carl Andre.) At the same time, his figures maintain vestigial traces of subjectivity, in the thrust of a chin, the tilt of a hip, and the set of a shoulder—callings to the heart. You can think and feel about his work indefinitely, without ever using it up. The best Giacomettis take you to the limit of your capacity to be moved by art. ♦



*Giacometti with his wife, Annette, in his Paris studio in the nineteen-fifties. His emaciated figures have a passion to connect.*

### IN FASHION

# THE WHITE BALL

*A paean to pearls.*

### BY JUDITH THURMAN

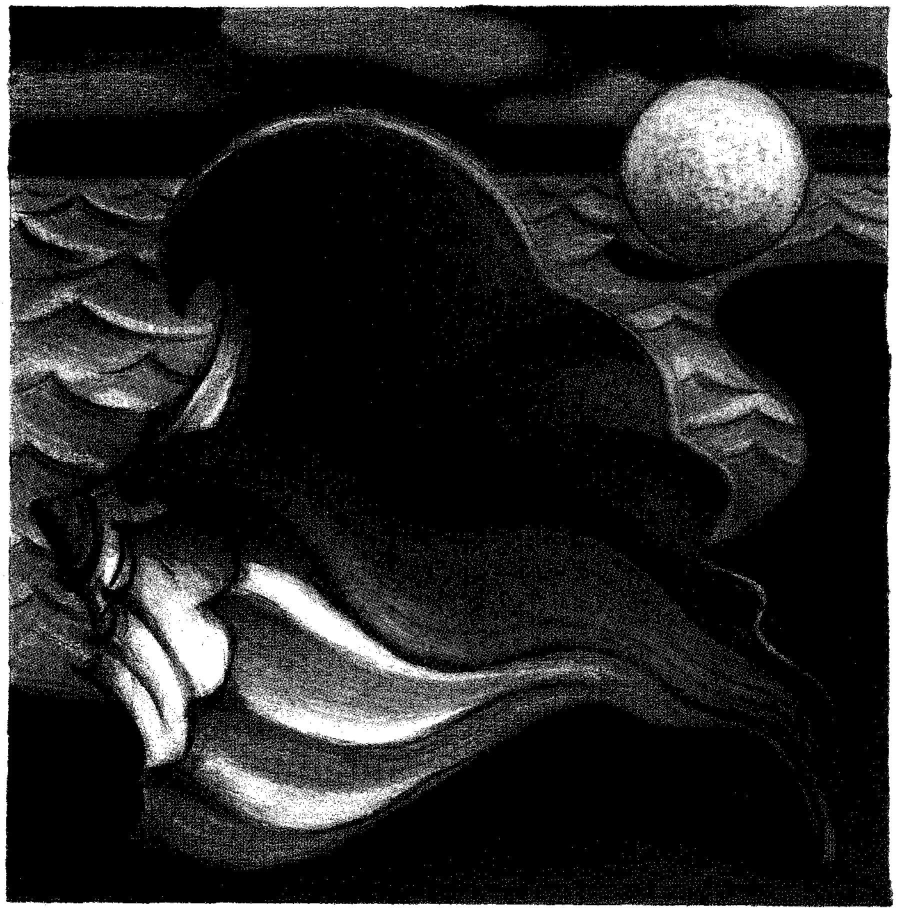
I once heard of an East African farmer who, in the nineteen-twenties, traded his vast flax plantation for a much smaller plot devoted to damask roses. He liked the notion of being able to transport an entire harvest to Paris in a suitcase, attar being worth more, per gram, than cocaine. I like that notion myself. Every writer's ambition is to distill the truth irreducibly from a thorny subject, and it is one reason I am such a fan of natural pearls. There is probably no product on earth that more radically dramatizes the discrepancy between the size of a treasure and its value.

The most comprehensive exhibit ever devoted to pearls, and to the paradoxes of their natural and social history, has just opened at the American Museum of Natural History. While the scholarly apparatus of the show is all one would expect—evolutionary trees, analyses of manganese pollution, artifacts from the button industry, a scale model of a pearl fishery, and an interactive display of a pearl's crystalline structure magnified fifty thousand times—its glamour comes as a surprise. Malacology, the study of mollusks, isn't a discipline noted for its sex appeal, and, despite the recent fashion comeback of mangy fur, the museum hasn't become a hangout for the Bryant Park crowd. Yet the baubles on display are as hard-core fabulous as anything for sale at Fred Leighton—jeweller to the stars—and mollusks turn out to be more creative than a lot of designers, and perhaps just as snappy when provoked: they'll sever a finger without thinking twice.

One learns, with considerable admiration, that nearly any member of the phylum—and there are more than a hundred thousand species living in saltwater and fresh, tropical and temperate climes—can, in theory, produce a pearl, its shell efficiently forecasting the gem's color. The pearl from a Queen Conch ranges from a pale blush to a deep fuchsia, and can grow to the size of a goodly bird's egg. The black-lipped pearl oyster from the South Pacific secretes a desirably large, iridescent sphere that has a metallic lustre ranging from gunmetal-gray to onyx, with tinges of blue, violet, rose, or green. Baler shells from the South China Sea yield a "melo" pearl the size and color of a Cavaillon melon ball. Sedentary bivalves (mollusk couch potatoes) like the clam, the oyster, and the mussel are the most reliable producers, but even a relatively antsy gastropod like the garden snail can, on occasion, deliver its non-nacreous little bundle. Abalone pearls are often cusp-shaped and nearly always baroque—an adjective that was used to describe irregular pearls before it was, in the late Renaissance, applied to art or architecture straining neurotically at its classical fetters. Jewellers have been inspired to set the suggestive, sometimes freakish bulges of baroque pearls as figurines: a swan, a snake, a dolphin, a bug, a Bacchus, an overfed baby in a cradle of gold filigree. A selection of their handiwork is on display, but none of it is as curious as the Chinese freshwater-mussel shells blistered with pearlized figures of Buddha and Chairman Mao, or the life-size model of the largest pearl ever found—a brainlike, fourteen-pound excrescence from a Philippine giant clam that is known as the Pearl of Allah. These are but a few of the show's strange and luminous charms. It is hard to think of another subject, particularly these days, that could find some common ground between Muhammad and Chanel.

Pearls have been a fixture of the fashion scene even longer than Karl Lagerfeld has—about five hundred million years—and have been prized since antiquity by nearly every culture in the world. To theologians of the major monotheisms, they represented spiritual perfection. The ancients supposed them to be frozen tears of the gods. Early naturalists believed that oysters were impregnated by raindrops, or the dew, or were shocked by bolts of lightning at sea. Later it was thought that they were seeded by grains of sand. Pearls are, in fact, formed in the living slime, through the struggle of an aragonite-secreting organism to protect its flesh against an irritant that is most often nothing more romantic than a parasitic worm, although sometimes a shrimp or even a small fish will find itself lacquered chicly to the shell wall. But there is something about a pearl, as there is about a French schoolgirl, that stimulates intense erotic reverie without its/her innocence ever being sullied. As the portraits of parvenu heiresses here suggest, pearls—unlike colored stones or even diamonds—are quite miraculously proof against vulgarity, even when flaunted wholesale by vulgarians.

The earliest mother-of-pearl artifacts date from the Neolithic Age in the Middle East. The Hopewell Indians of the Ohio River Valley (200 B.C.-500 A.D.) harvested freshwater-mussel pearls by the quart, and burned them in their funeral rituals. The Romans were mad for pearls—Caligula literally so. He lavished them not only upon his shoes but upon his horse. According to Suetonius, a general named Vitellius financed a campaign with a single pearl from his mother's earring. If no gem has been as alluring as the pearl to poets, folklorists, and moralists, or to novelists of manners like Colette, Scott Fitzgerald, and Edith Wharton, it is probably because there are few symbols that so intimately link the entitlements of the highborn to the privations of the lowly. Steinbeck's "The Pearl" was on the summer reading list of my twelve-year-old son, Will. "This novel is depressing," he wrote. "The moral is that when something really, really expensive is involved, evil triumphs over good." But on rare occasions, a pearl story involves a just, or just-enough, reward. In the early sixteenth century, one of the many slaves forced to work in the oyster beds off the coast of Panama was able to buy his freedom when he surfaced with a pear-shaped white pearl weighing ten grams, which has since become known as La Peregrina. Having once belonged to Bloody Mary, it now nestles upon the considerably cushier bosom of Elizabeth Taylor, who has lent it to the



show. Perhaps the pearl achieves its ultimate perfection as a metaphor for life's inequities.

The best grade of pearl is found in the waters of the Persian Gulf, but until the exploitation of mollusks and humans depleted supplies, some of the finest gems came from the New World. When Columbus set sail for the Indies with a high-end shopping list from Ferdinand and Isabella—the original "*les musts*"—pearls were at the top of it. On his third voyage west, he discovered the oyster beds off the islands of Cubagua and Margarita, initiating a pearl rush that, according to the show's companion volume, "Pearls: A Natural History" (Abrams; $49.95), flooded the coffers of the Old World "with such an abundance of riches that it helped usher in the flowering of Renaissance Europe." The curators estimate that in three decades a hundred and twenty million pearls were harvested from American waters. Queen Elizabeth I acquired most of hers from English pirates preying on the Spanish treasure fleet. The abandon with which she used them to encrust her gowns and headgear had a delayed, plebeian counterpart in a late-nineteenth-century craze started by a Cockney street sweeper named Henry Croft, who artfully plastered a three-piece suit and a top hat with thousands of pearl buttons, and inspired a fashion cult—still in existence—known as the Pearlies. Their fantastical costumes, a form of folk-art couture, unite the two greatest strengths of British style: eccentric, working-class cheek and punctilious tailoring. The Pearlies prefigure contemporary designers like Malcolm McLaren, Vivienne Westwood, and Alexander McQueen—and even that great Anglophile, Chanel. There is only one photograph of Mademoiselle in the show, festooned with pearls, of course—some real, some faux. It suggests her debt to all the Renaissance queens, Mogul rajahs, Belle Époque courtesans, and Jazz Age flappers with whom she shares a gallery. But it also suggests why Chanel is the designer who defined style for the new century. With supreme irony and simplicity, she appropriated two quintessential emblems of power. One was the modern capitalist's sober, deceptively democratic-looking business suit. The other—a superfluity of pearls—distilled what was most gorgeous and hieratic about the ancien régime.

Every important natural pearl was the nucleus of a narrative that accreted new layers, just like a pearl, as the gem changed hands. The advent of the cultured product destroyed both the economy and the mystique of the pearl trade. Modern perliculture was pioneered in the early nineteen-hundreds by a Japanese entrepreneur, Kokichi Mikimoto, whose scientists perfected a technology for nucleating the pearl oyster on a commercial scale (though Linnaeus had experimented with culturing pearls successfully in the eighteenth century, and the fruits of his lab work, two tiny golden globes still attached by T-shaped metal posts to a fragment of shell, are on loan from the Linnaean Society of London). A cultured pearl is just as "real" as a natural pearl, though it has been stimulated and standardized by human intervention. One of the more unforgettable installations at the show is a video on the nucleation process, in which a technician working with a very sharp scalpel implants a nacre bead from a Mississippi-bred freshwater mussel and a frilly slice of mantle tissue into the fleshy, pulsating gonad of a marine oyster. You probably shouldn't watch if you're contemplating a breast enlargement.

One is supposed to re-string good pearls at least every other year, and I recently took my own pearls in for a checkup. I own two strands, the finer of which is a choker of very small natural pearls that dates from the eighteen-nineties and probably belonged to a débutante. I usually wear it with a man's white cotton undershirt—Blanche DuBois and Stanley Kowalski in the same outfit. "Most women today would rather own a strand of ten-millimetre Akoyas than the much smaller natural pearls that they could buy for the same price," observed Edith Weber, the dealer in antique and estate jewelry who sold my husband the necklace and who supervises its repair. "The natural pearl has, alas, become a curiosity. It represents a vanished way of life and an aesthetic ideal, a noble folly, since only an X-ray can tell the difference between the cultured and the natural." An X-ray or a lover. As Paul Claudel noted in the speech he gave at Pierre Cartier's induction into the Légion d'Honneur, the value of a pearl has one true measure, the desire it inspires. ♦

THE CURRENT CINEMA

# UNSHELTERED LIVES

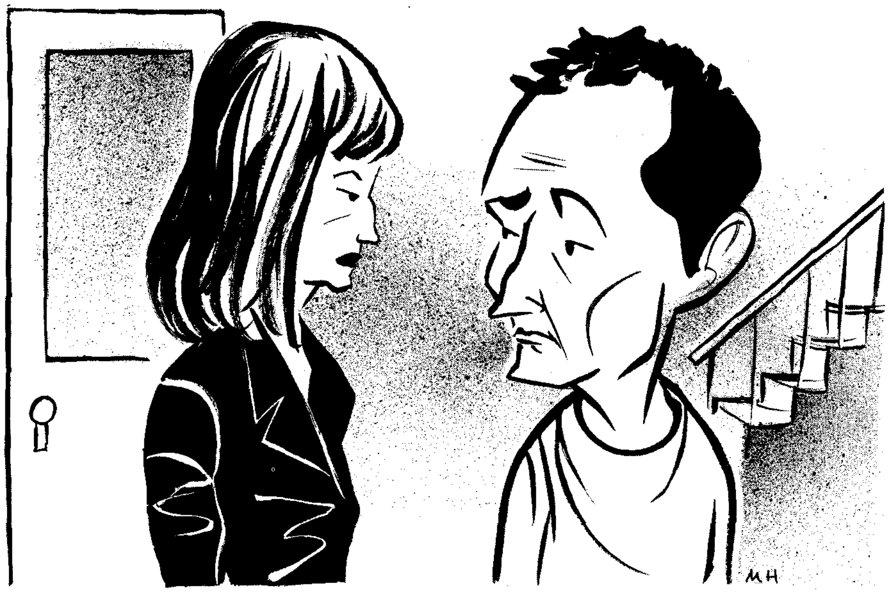
*"Intimacy," "Life as a House," "The Last Castle."*

BY DAVID DENBY

In "Intimacy," a harshly explicit drama of love and sex set in London, the actors Mark Rylance and Kerry Fox have fine, non-fantasy bodies—strong but not pumped and toned, and seen without the usual honeyed glaze of commercial eroticism. Emerging from dark and sordid backgrounds, their flesh has weight and substance. And yet Rylance and Fox are not quite presented realistically. When they are naked, they seem almost to be glowing with a pale white light. As photographed by the cinematographer, Eric Gautier, they could be figures in a painting by Lucian Freud—isolated nudes, caught in a ghostly English chill. The director, Patrice Chéreau, preserves a certain mystery: the bodies are penetrable but not knowable. Jay (Rylance) and Claire (Fox) have a practiced ritual. They meet in silence, every Wednesday, in Jay's squalid, unfurnished flat. He kicks empty bottles and other garbage out of the way and throws a skinny mattress or a duvet on the floor. They then grapple like warships locked in combat, violating all the known manuals of pleasure—the sex is more about hunger and release than ecstasy. Yet it's not a power struggle, exactly. There are no sexual politics because there's not much temperament or background on display; on the floor, Jay and Claire are equals. Adapted from stories by Hanif Kureishi, "Intimacy" is dour and grimy—it might be called "Last Tango in Lewisham." Earlier films made from Kureishi's material, like "My Beautiful Laundrette" and "Sammy and Rosie Get Laid," were rowdy and good-humored, but in "Intimacy" no one cracks a joke.

Patrice Chéreau has staged avant-garde theatre and opera productions across Europe, and he has made a few movies, including the period drama "Queen Margot," but I don't believe he's ever done anything as striking—or as exasperating—as "Intimacy." He and Gautier, working with a handheld camera, step right into the center of routine movements, cutting off body parts and even the tops and bottoms of faces; the editing feverishly jumps ahead within scenes, as if chasing something. We're not always sure what's being chased, or why, and some of the scenes, trying for a furious intensity, become merely garbled. Confusion reigns, often intentionally.

A restless and unhappy man in his thirties, Jay has left his wife and two young sons. He moves swiftly through the streets, but he's not getting anywhere. Mark Rylance, who is best known as a Shakespearean stage actor, has a melancholy widow's peak, beautiful dark eyes, and a troubled voice in which contempt blends with yearning. As Jay, he's a tense and quizzical figure, a man caught between baffled pride and self-loathing. The New Zealander Kerry Fox wears her brown hair in bangs, and she has a lovely wide mouth that breaks into a sudden smile. Her Claire, who hardly speaks when she's with Jay, is for a long time a figure of mystery. What does she want from him? Perhaps Chéreau goes too far with Jay's contradictions and Claire's enigmatic behavior. Jay is a tender father, but we can't really tell what his children mean to him, or why his relationship with his wife collapsed. He has a job mixing drinks at a fancy bar, and he has quarrelsome and pointless friendships, one with a young gay Frenchman who works with him, another with a sepulchral waster named Victor. Chéreau, who adapted the Kureishi stories with Anne-Louise Trividic, seems to be attempting a generational portrait of Londoners who are not quite gifted or single-minded enough to fulfill their dreams—failed musicians, painters, and actors who have drifted into wretchedness and anxious bickering. The nasty cigarette-butt milieu bears some similarities to the Paris of Henry Miller's "Tropic of Cancer," but there's nothing comparable to Miller's joyous acceptance of life near the bottom.



*Kerry Fox and Mark Rylance in "Intimacy," adapted from stories by Hanif Kureishi.*

Jay longs for more than sex; he follows Claire around London and discovers that she acts in a theatre in a pub basement, playing to tiny audiences in "The Glass Menagerie." Jay becomes friends of a sort with her devoted husband, Andy (Timothy Spall), a cab-driver who talks a blue streak to cheer himself up. Spall, with his big gut and chinless face, is a large, noisy, Dickensian figure, and he brings some emotional fluency and coherence to the movie. When Jay begins tormenting Andy, and Andy, in turn, flails away at Claire, we care a great deal more for the wounded husband than for either of the lovers, who have trouble explaining themselves. Claire, it turns out, can at least express herself onstage; she's rooted and grounded in a way that Jay is not, and it enrages him that she enters an affair from the safety of her marriage. The dream-idyll of meeting for sex without consequences, without love or commitment, doesn't last. Maybe it never does. But in "Intimacy" the characters inhabit a peculiar dead end in which they all behave cruelly to one another because there's nothing but blank walls on all sides of them. "Intimacy" is a strange, anguished art object—powerful in a kind of haplessly embittered way. The movie holds one in its surly grip, but when it's over, few people, I think, are likely to be haunted by it. Futility may work as a mood in a short story, but n a full-scale movie it doesn't bear lookng at for very long.

"Life as a House," from a screenplay by Mark Andrus, and directed by Irwin Winkler, is about a man with four months to live. I tag it that way because the picture, which has many virtues, including unusual charm, is nevertheless drastically limited by its ironclad, old-Hollywood construction. Kevin Kline is George, the doomed fellow, who devotes himself to building the house he has always dreamed of, on a golden cliff in Southern California. As you can guess from the title, he's really constructing a new life for himself. The charm comes from many directions—most consistently from Kline, who gives one of the strongest performances of his film career. George is a failure, a man who doesn't think much of himself but s determined, despite everything, to have his own way for as long as he can. The performance is most alive in moments of anger, an emotion that lights Kline's face in ways that we've never seen from him in movies. George's principal task is the reconstruction of his son (Hayden Christensen), a sixteen-year-old who is pierced, eyeshadowed, and drifting toward homosexual prostitution to pay for a drug habit. He's the American teen as nightmare, and the way George takes hold of him—putting him to work, at once bullying and loving him—will impress anyone who has ever wrestled with a sullen kid. As the house goes up, people drop by to saw a few boards, or flirt, or make mischief. Kristin Scott Thomas, as George's rueful ex-wife, relaxes onscreen for the first time, and the lively young actress Jena Malone, playing a next-door neighbor, gets to know George's son in the shower, which he goes over to use daily. But just when this sunshiny and affectionate comedy is beginning to bloom, the inevitable, tear-jerking conclusion closes off the fun like a Venetian blind blocking the light.

In Rod Lurie's effectively demagogic melodrama, "The Last Castle," James Gandolfini plays the corrupt warden of a military prison—a ruthless, smirking coward who speaks with precise diction, fumbles with his glasses, and listens to Mozart. He's obviously a very bad guy. His adversary is a general who has been stripped of his rank and imprisoned for disobeying orders—Robert Redford as a vision of mild-mannered prowess, a man with such natural charisma that he doesn't have to raise his voice to lead a prison population of thugs in an insurrection. The trouble is that Redford doesn't actually convey much authority. Military men aren't really within his range, and the performance is less about leadership than about Robert Redford attempting to do a Lee Marvin turn without resorting to obvious emphasis. The dramaturgy of "The Last Castle" leans heavily on such earlier protests against authority as "Mutiny on the Bounty" and "The Caine Mutiny," and there's more than a trace of "The Dirty Dozen" and other rabble-rousing entertainments in which a band of military screwups get whipped into shape, their pride in their uniform restored. The conclusion of the movie—the unfurling of an American flag—couldn't be better timed to raise a lump in the national throat. Lurie could not have predicted that, but, even so, he's a shameless, if skilled, manipulator of easy emotions. ◆

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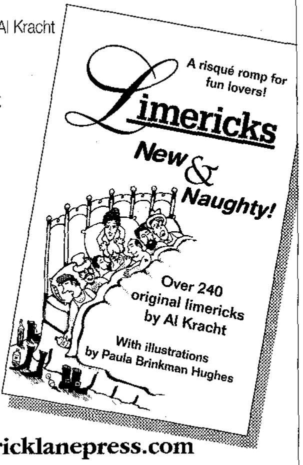
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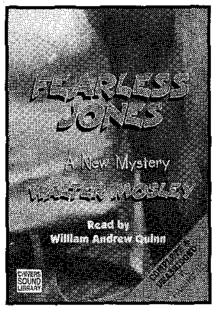

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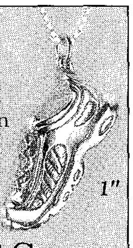

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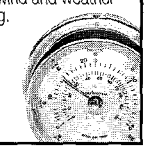

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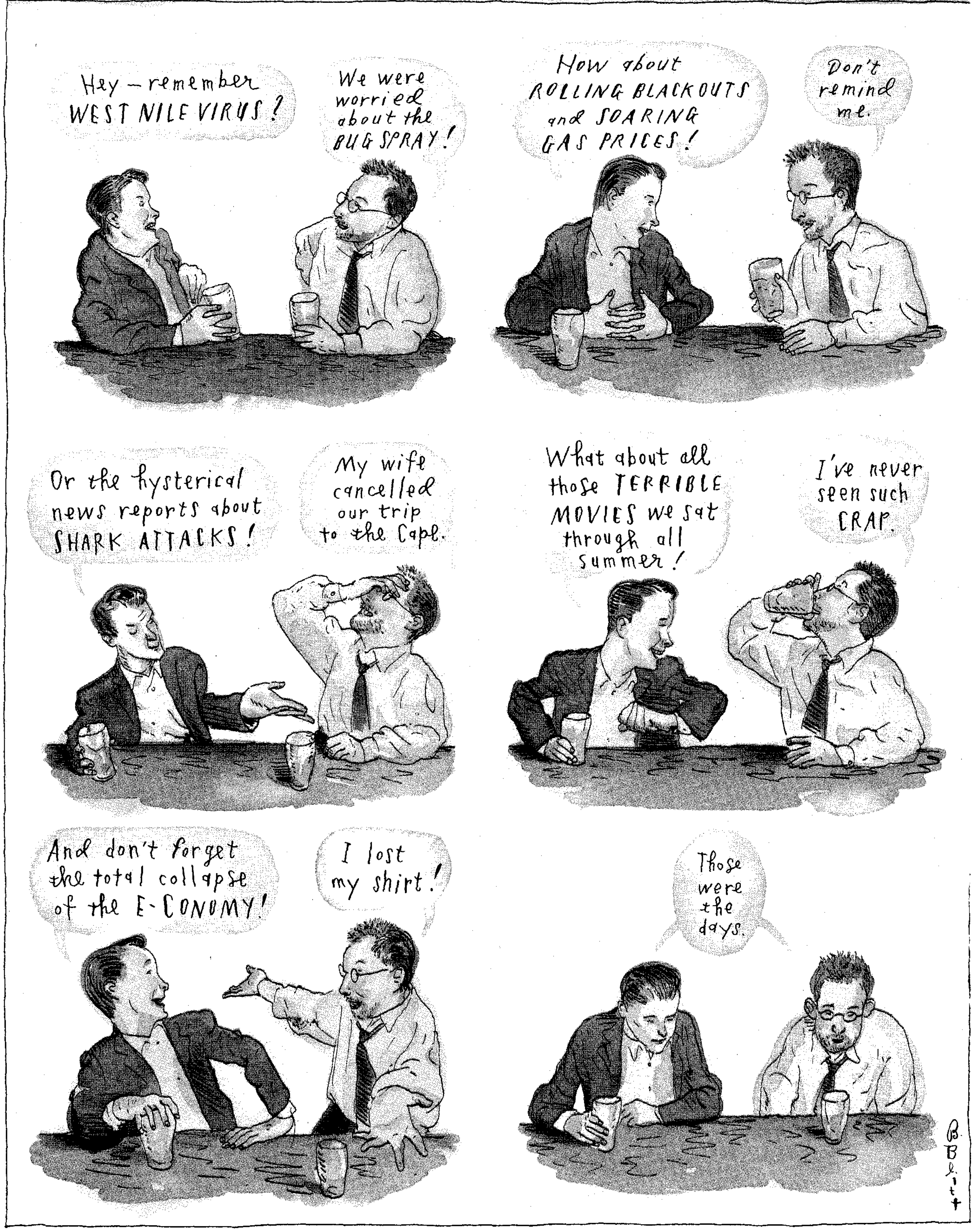
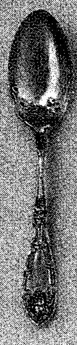
THE BACK PAGE BY BARRY BLITT

# NOSTALGIA COMIX


Hey—remember WEST NILE VIRUS?
We were worried about the BUG SPRAY!
How about ROLLING BLACKOUTS and SOARING GAS PRICES!
Don't remind me.
Or the hysterical news reports about SHARK ATTACKS!
My wife cancelled our trip to the Cape.
What about all those TERRIBLE MOVIES we sat through all summer!
I've never seen such CRAP.
And don't forget the total collapse of the E-CONOMY!
I lost my shirt!
Those were the days.
B. Blitt



How does one stomach the atrocities of slavery?
Evidently, with a spoonful of sugar.

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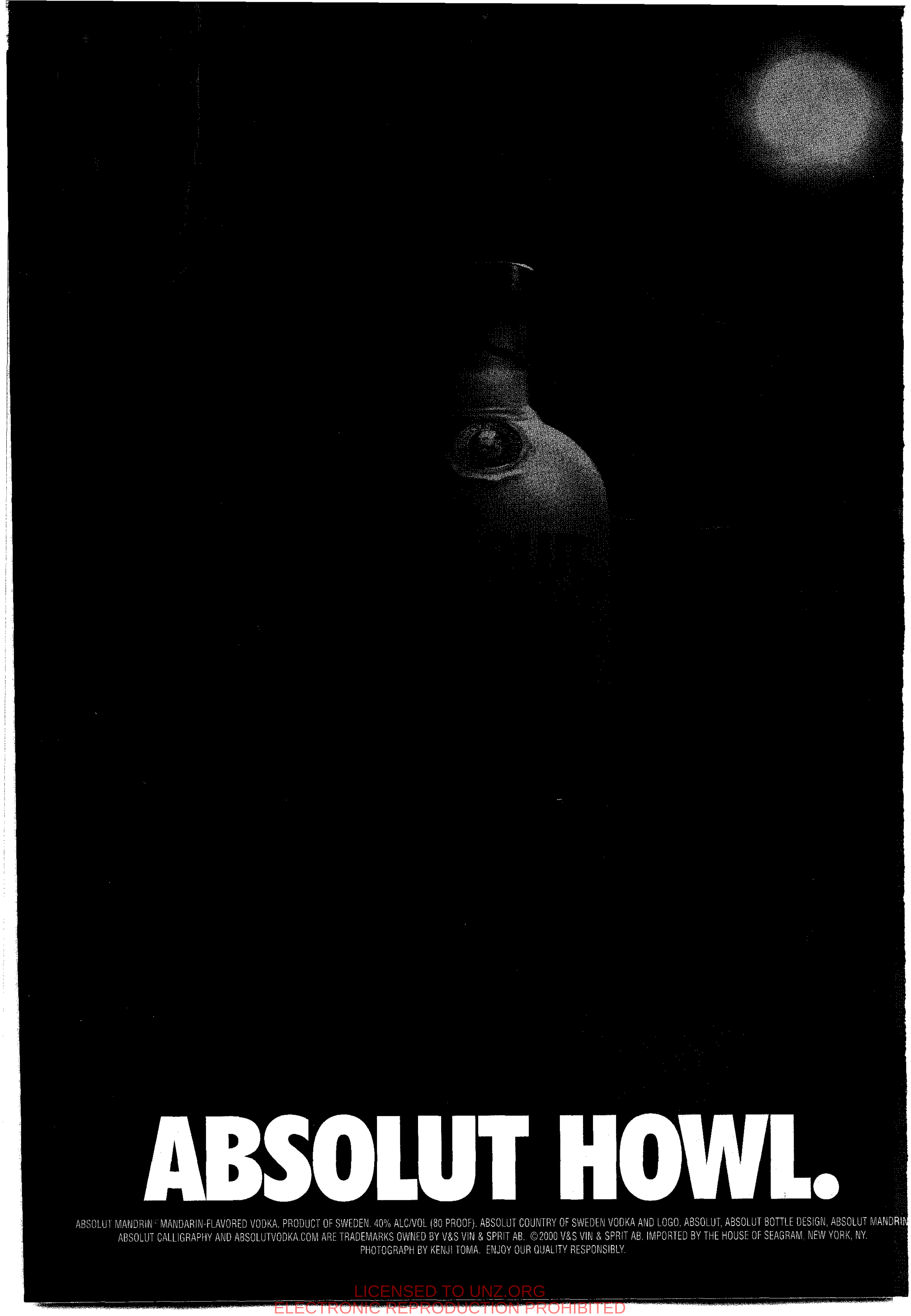

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